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VIOLET;

OR,

THE DANSEUSE:

A PORTRAITURE

OF

HUMAN PASSIONS AND CHARACTER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN,

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH-STREET.

1836.

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VIOLET.

CHAPTER I.

"'Tis said that marriages are made in heaven.
But I have known, at least, some six or seven,
Of which the origin the wise could trace
Most clearly to a very different place.
Not that I mean a single word to state
Against this peerless lady and her mate:
If passion, fancy, bear a holier name,
The effect in this one case has been the same;
The bridegroom dotes intensely, and the bride
Can boast of worldly wisdom for her guide."

ANON.

"HARCOURT, I am told you are going to be married," said D'Arcy; accosting him in St. James's-street.

"Who told you so?" said Harcourt; looking very much what I once heard said of a certain gentleman, that he had the air of a poacher, conscious that the tail of a pheasant, out of season, had escaped from his coat pocket behind.

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"That I forget; but is it true? because I must congratulate,—felicitate."

"For Heaven's sake, D'Arcy, say no more about it," said Harcourt, taking hold of D'Arcy's arm. "I don't want to have the whole cursed world buzzing in my ears with congratulations. I mean to do it,—I have made up my mind. What's the use of being a man if one is not to have a mind of one's own? I know what suits me,—I am essentially a marrying man; and I hate all those London girls, they have no freshness about them, none of the innocence of—of—"

"Of Miss Norris?"

"I don't mean that, exactly; but, in short, I know what suits myself, and I don't care a d—n for her not having a sixpence."

"Oh! no,—half 'those London girls' have not a sixpence."

"Ah, but I mean, I don't care about her being,—having been, on the stage; what does it matter? A handsome girl, as she is! and so well brought up, too!—what does that signify?"

"Oh, it is entirely a matter of opinion."

"Yes, it is," rejoined Harcourt, as if he was

comforted; "after all, the thing is to be happy, and I rather applaud myself for not being talked out of my intentions by my friends. I have no idea of a man who has not the spirit to go out of the beaten track when it suits him; as if, when she is my wife, she was not my wife!"

"What, do they say she will not be?" asked D'Arcy, with *naïveté*.

"No, no; but what I mean is, what does it matter about who she was, when she is my wife?"

"It is entirely a matter of opinion, as I said before; at all events, you are satisfied, and that is to you,—must be to you, a point gained." And D'Arcy tried to leave his friend, but Harcourt took his arm, and hesitatingly inquired, —"So I have not your approval, D'Arcy,—eh? I see that."

"My dear Harcourt, I shall be too charmed to become better acquainted with the future Mrs. Harcourt; and I am the last man in the world to foresee the possibility of disapproving of the wife of my friend."

D'Arcy escaped, and Harcourt endeavoured

to force away the unpleasant reflections, which his foolish arguments showed plainly he had to contend with in his own mind. He soon succeeded, for he went directly to see Emily.

The preparations for the marriage were not long in making: a special license was procured, and in the presence of Mrs. Norris, the Woodvilles, and D'Arcy, Emily Norris was united to Mr. Harcourt. D'Arcy was the only friend that Harcourt asked to be present, and he was too happy to profit by the opportunity of meeting Violet.

D'Arcy made some excuses to the Woodvilles for not having been to them for so long a time; and they in their turn expressed their surprise that he had not. Mrs. Woodville could not conceal her satisfaction at seeing him again; but her invitations to D'Arcy to come and visit them as before, were not echoed by her husband. However, there was not much time for conversation before the bride was led in by her mother, and Harcourt entered the room at the same moment. He looked ill, and as if his mind was not at ease; he gazed at Emily when she appeared, and then, before he

went towards her, approached D'Arcy, and said in a low voice, "At least she is handsome, I have that excuse."

"Yes, indeed, if that be one."

"At all events, to the last moment you have dissuaded me. For God's sake, should this turn out ill, do not reproach me with your former advice."

"For worlds I would not," answered D'Arcy. "But, my dear fellow, how comes it that your courage fails you now?"

"It does not,—but it is for life, and I may have been mistaken."

"None of us are infallible."

"Thank you, D'Arcy. Chance what may," continued Harcourt, emphatically, "you and I are old friends," and he walked up to Emily.

The ceremony began. It was impossible not to allow that if beauty could make Harcourt's strange marriage an excusable one, it was not deficient. Emily Norris was very handsome,—it must be called a fine style of beauty, also. There was something very aristocratic in her finely-formed figure, and her well-bred manners did not contradict the im-

pression made by her first appearance. Mrs. Norris had taken pains to furnish her daughter with every accomplishment, and she worked upon a profitable soil. So far there was nothing objectionable, and nothing more remained to be done for Emily than to leave her in her new station, to acquire, if she could, the ease of good society, of that society in which Harcourt lived, but of which Emily, as yet, knew nothing. During the ceremony D'Arcy stood next Violet Woodville; she thought much less of what was going on in her presence than she would have done if D'Arcy had not occupied her thoughts almost wholly.

He, on the contrary, was graver than usual, and, to judge by that, and his air of fixed attention, it appeared as if he was absorbed in the service. Once, when Violet casually looked at him, she was struck with his countenance: it was sorrowful, and when his eyes fell upon her, she could have thought she saw them full of tears. Could the marriage affect him so much as this? Violet reproached herself for not attending to it more. Alas! her thoughts

recurred to him, and she forgot that "thou shalt not make to thyself idols, or worship them."

D'Arcy walked home with the Woodvilles. It was a beautiful September day, and he listened attentively to their summer plans, for even the Woodvilles had their summer plans; what English people have not? and those who have not yet escaped from town never think the summer elapsed until they have.

Violet had some geraniums in her hand, but, by degrees, the air scattered their red leaves, and, seeing this, before she reached home she threw their remains away on the pavement. D'Arcy watched with his eye the useless discarded flowers.

"To-morrow you must let me come and see you; I have not been in your house for such a long time,—may I come?" said D'Arcy, winningly.

Mrs. Woodville replied by reminding him that she had already begged him to renew his visits.

"*Au revoir,* then," said D'Arcy; but, as he approached and took Violet's hand, he looked

dejected, and he said something briefly and sadly, but what, Violet could not hear.

Alone in the street, D'Arcy retraced his steps until he reached the spot where the geraniums had been cast away. There they lay still, on the sunny pavement,—one by one he picked them up. No eye was there to see him, and no one to repeat the tale, or make a merit of it in the eyes of his mistress,—yet his lips kissed the dying flowers, and carefully he took them home.

In a listless mood D'Arcy wandered to his own abode. The end of September in London is just the time, if ever, that nature cries out for the country,—it is the interval between the end of all things and the recommencement of them,—which will give rise to a desire for fresh air even in the breast of the most thorough-paced town-bred gentleman; and this was now the case with D'Arcy, or if it was not, his ill humour and the gloomy turn of his mind, as he walked along the streets, gave testimony to some source of discontent destructive of good humour.

He envied Harcourt,—how pleased Har-

court would have been if he could have guessed it,—yes, D'Arcy envied him; not his being the husband of Emily, but it was envy of another's momentary happiness, and a yearning after its possession. D'Arcy felt irritated against the whole world, and more so still with himself. He took a fit of hatred against mankind,—he saw everybody worse than they are,—he reflected upon the inequalities of fate,—he disliked his own existence, and contemned and sneered at every other person's.

He thought he was wisely moralising. "Vu en passant, un homme blasé ainsi qu' un ambitieux deçu, resemble a un sage*."

He felt weary of life, and a wish for something better, and when he tried to grasp the "lighter than air, hope's summer visions," and saw, alas! how vainly,

"If but a beam of sober reason play,"

his mind returned to its bitterness; and he felt regret and sadness, and the *néant* of all things.

"En vain la passion entreprend quelquefois

* Madame de Genlis.

à nous persuader que nous sommes nés pour le plaisir*."

Ideas of a higher import will at times cross the mind of every man, and what does it signify how trivial the course that has given rise to them?

The reflection will come home as freely to the bosom of a George d'Arcy as it would to that of the sober-minded philosopher, who gazes on planets till almost forgetting that he lives in one.

On reaching his house D'Arcy's servant gave him a note. He read it through attentively; he reflected for an instant, and then ordered his cabriolet to come to the door. Before he stepped into it, D'Arcy had carefully deposited between the leaves of a book the almost flowerless geraniums he had so tenderly rescued. It is curious how ungenerous our conduct can be, and how tender, how divine almost, our sentiments!

The greater the pity that a bad education should make our feelings so often the only fruits of a disposition that has emanations

* Massillon.

from Heaven, and that the selfishness of a corrupt life should be the corroder of all

> "That immortal fire,
> To human hearts in mercy given,
> To lift from earth our low desire."
>
> BYRON.

D'Arcy drove to a house in one of the squares at the west end; he was admitted, and shown by the servant into the drawing-room.

A lady, and a very pretty one, was reclining upon the sofa; she was young, not above five or six and twenty, and curiously dressed—rather theatrically; a style of costume, by the bye, which would occasion me great uneasiness if any symptoms of it appeared in my domestic circle. She was very fair and pale, with languishing, overflowing blue eyes—very pretty eyes, but bearing no resemblance to my wife's, thank Heaven! or it would be impossible to have the satisfaction of saying, like one of Paul de Kock's heroes, "*mon ami, je ne le suis pas.*"

The lady, such as she has been slightly

pourtrayed, started up on seeing Mr. d'Arcy, and flew towards him.

"Heavens!" she exclaimed.

"Surely you expected me," said D'Arcy, in answer to this exclamation.

"Yes, but my nerves are so shattered, my feelings have been so wrought upon; but, thank God! it is you."

"Why, certainly it is; did you want me particularly to-day?"

"Is that what you say to me?"

"I really only asked a very simple question."

"I am most miserable;" and the speaker, in testimony of her words, dived her head into a heap of sofa cushions.

"Do you want your salts?" asked D'Arcy, coldly.

"Monster!" murmured the lady.

"I had better leave you at present," and he rose.

In an instant a shriek was uttered, and his knees were clasped by the softest white hands.

"Don't scream so, I beg," cried D'Arcy, looking round with a most alarmed counte-

nance, "you totally forget that your servants will hear you."

"You don't think they did, I trust?" replied the lady, in a suddenly rational tone of voice.

"There's no telling,—I wish you would learn to be quieter,—you know I hate scenes."

"Be kind to me then, George," was said by the lady in an imploring tone.

"Oh! of course; but you are so very unreasonable, and you have no sort of discretion; I cannot stand it—you compromise me as well as yourself, and by your folly you lose your reputation, and, some of these days, your husband will be as wise as you choose to make the rest of the world. But this is not all; I must, in kindness to you, express now, as I have before done, my determination to give up our intimacy. The world will talk, and if it would not, you would force it. The end must be something unpleasant, and I wish to save you from that, and also myself from being the object of your greatest hatred, as the cause. You never will remember that the race of Lydia Languish is extinct; that is, they have long ceased to be the fashion; and as you are particularly a lady of fashion, this part does not

become you at all. I do not want to offend you, but you do oblige me to tell you that I never could see wherein consisted your misfortunes. You have always dwelt upon them, and out of common complaisance I would not always contradict you ; but really——"

"What!" at length exclaimed D'Arcy's companion, "is it not enough to be married to a man I cannot endure?"

"Then why did you marry him?"

"I was persuaded into it."

"And allowing you were, then, is your husband's whole life to be the sacrifice of your weakness of mind? But who persuaded you? —the most indulgent of parents, if I knew anything of Lady Glanmore: her sole desire was to form your happiness, so that, I will answer for it, had you preferred it in the very least degree, you might still have been Miss Glanmore, with a very legitimate right to make as many men unhappy as you could, instead of the one most illegitimate object of your present caprice."

"You are very severe, Mr. d'Arcy; and from you, at least, I did not expect——"

"If I am, I beg your pardon—I feel I have

no right to be so; but I can't help wishing, for your own sake, to point out where I think you exaggerate your miseries; and you remember you declared it was against them that you said you clung to me for refuge. I must observe, then, that the most objectionable feature which I discover in your husband, is the very tie which unluckily binds him to you, and that had you been Mrs. d'Arcy, things would not have been so different as you imagine; except, indeed, that you would have to struggle with poverty, and probably have envied the lot of the mistress of this comfortable house."

"Do you conceive me to have so base a mind? And is it thus I am appreciated?" demanded the lady, indignantly.

"Not at all base; but you interrupt me. What I was going on to say is, that, with your very peculiar disposition, you would probably have disliked whoever you had married, and that therefore it would be wiser to hate less indiscreetly, and to feel some little gratitude to the man who submits with so good a grace, and, *en revanche*, bestows all that both his fortune can afford, and his kindness dictate."

"Yes, but he adores me; and if he is well behaved to me, it is to please himself."

"It is an agreeable species of selfishness, however, and of a kind that may fluctuate. I was going to say, also, that upon my word and honour I do think your husband is actually many degrees better than most of that class, and positively I see nothing in him to justify your unconscionable train of sentimentality, a little in the falsetto style, and which may one day meet with a harsher reproof than I could find in my heart to bestow on so beautiful and young a lady as you are."

"I hate flattery; and what have you been saying all this time?—wanting me to despise myself?"

"To correct yourself, say rather, and to learn not to undervalue the advantages you possess. Life is short, and the season of youth is shorter—the past cannot be recalled. If there is anything to regret while you are young, it is wiser to remember it as little, instead of as much as you can; when middle age arrives it is yet time enough to despair under the accumulated miseries of a life without one solid

grievance; for, believe me, things are more equalised than you suspect, and, having seen a good deal more of the world than you have, if it will be satisfactory, I can assure you I know few people whose fate seems so happily cast as yours, and that throughout my experience, I have not met with one case of perfect bliss; besides, if you have small annoyances from other people's faults,

> "Tous ces defauts humains nous donnent dans la vie,
> Des moyens d'exercer notre philosophie."

"Are you going out as a missionary to convert the Zealanders?" asked the lady, scornfully.

"My dear friend, do not be angry with me; yes, I am going away, though not as a missionary, and it is the fact of my departure which makes me try before I go to remind you of a few sources of consolation, not for my absence, but to correct the misfortunes for which you originally requested my sympathy."

"Much have I obtained it! whither turn against the ingratitude of the whole world?"

"I am certainly not ungrateful," answered D'Arcy, apathetically; "if I were, I should not

have made myself so disagreeable during this visit. It is in gratitude for the many pleasant hours you have enabled me to pass that I have said these undisguised truths, and which there is nothing so easy as for you to forget; and if you like to have lovers, who knows better than I the swarm that would solicit the honour? I only wish you to make the most of your advantages, or, by making you feel that you have some, to prevent your imprudence, which threatens to ruin you."

"And you abandon me?"

"No, there is nothing to justify your putting it in that light. I am simply obliged to leave England."

"And supposing you were not?"

"Why ask me that question?"

"I do, and will have an answer!"

"In that case,—my not leaving England, I wish to remain your friend as much as you will permit me, but nothing more."

"In short, you never have loved me."

"It is of no use returning to that old attack, and now, too, especially." D'Arcy rose to take leave, and then the lady, with a little of the dignity she had not hitherto shown, exclaimed,

"At all events, I have liked you—loved you: that you believe, I hope, or I must be without excuse in your eyes."

"I do,—that you have thought so, at least; but as I do not think that, *au fond*, I am the person, as a lover even, most likely to suit you, I fear the time will come when you will wonder over the bygone days of your youth, and at your *aimable* condescension towards so great an admirer of one of the very prettiest persons that exist."

D'Arcy, with these concluding words, hastened to leave the room.

"Stay, oh, stay one moment!" cried the handsome lady.

"It is better not, you will enslave me still," answered D'Arcy.

"But you must tell me, do you think me a fool, or depraved, or what? I like to know what people think of me: above all, are you in love with some one else?"

"I do not think you a fool, I do not think you *quite* depraved," said D'Arcy smiling, "and I cannot help being much interested in the happiness of one so young, and whose fate is held in her own hands."

"But if you would guide me! No. Yet, after all, is it not worth while to be loved by me? You pretend to admire me, and you know my affection for you. Alas!"

The lady sighed, and played with the rings on her fingers, and then took up a pocket-handkerchief with Mathilde embroidered in old English letters, and in gold, in the corner. Mathilde swept the handkerchief across her eyelids, leaving them still sufficiently bedewed to touch, if possible, the heart of D'Arcy. But D'Arcy was not new to scenes like the present, and a long acquaintance had made him perfectly *au fait* with the character of Mathilde; and he, two or three times in his life, had gone through the seething cauldron of a lady's wrath, to whom a man declares, not his eternal love, but the respectful friendship that for both their sakes he proffers in lieu of it. How is it that ladies are always so angry when this very handsome compromise is proposed to them; for friendship among themselves they have been known to rave about: but women are such contradictory creatures!

"You forget," said D'Arcy, remembering himself, so as to respire a most melodious sigh,

meant as a little galanterie to the half-wiped tears—"you forget I am leaving England so shortly."

"But you can come back, and in the mean time correspond, that is, if you will swear to fall in love with no one else."

"Oh, no, I will swear nothing; you would then, you know, think it was out of respect to my oath that my heart remained faithful, and then love and fidelity, according to your creed, are so involuntary; so I will swear nothing except, to the end of time, that you are a most lovely lady, with the very dearest eyes! I will call again—adieu—for the present I shall be out of town!" And pretending not to hear her further remonstrances, the *ci-devant* lover rushed down stairs, and, jumping into his cabriolet, drove rapidly away.

CHAPTER II.

"Oh, Love! what is it in this world of ours
Which makes it fatal to be loved? Ah! why
With cypress branches hast thou wreathed thy bowers,
And made thy best interpreter a sigh?
As those who doat on odours pluck the flowers,
And place them on the breast—but place to die;
And the frail beings we would fondly cherish
Are laid within our bosom but to perish."

BYRON.

D'ARCY drove to his lodgings, and was soon lost in the perusal of a letter he found awaiting him, with a most important official seal. It was from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to cancel his previous appointment, and to confer upon him one that he most desired, that of Secretary of Embassy at one of the foreign courts. Owing to some peculiar circumstances, he was requested not to lose time, if possible, in setting out for his destination, as the former secretary had died suddenly, and the principal attaché was on leave of absence to attend a sick parent. In short, the ambassador was represented to be in a most difficult situation; and D'Arcy saw, in return for his appointment, he had

nothing to do but to obey the order he received to the very letter, and leave England within four-and-twenty hours. There was a post-script from the Minister—"To save time, as I shall be at Tarsley House, could not you ride down there by five o'clock? I could then give you final instructions, and you will be ready to start as early as may be to-morrow."

D'Arcy looked at his watch; it was half-past four: he ordered his horse instantly to come round, and muttered to himself, "As early as may be to-morrow!" For a minute he stood still, as a man does, doing nothing, when he is suddenly oppressed with an overwhelming tide of business. A thousand ideas rapidly crossed his mind—Violet—his new appointment—the ambassador—the steam-boat—Tarsley House—letters that must be written—debts that must be paid—sundry articles that must be purchased—his landlady; all these, and a thousand other things, persons, and events, crowded on the mind of our hero. Once more he rang his bell, and gave his servant as many directions as he conceived it possible for him to execute during his ride to Putney.

"Understand," said D'Arcy, "that to-mor-

row, by twelve o'clock, I shall be on the Dover road; therefore all delay must be out of the question. My horse is at the door, I see; I shall be back here by six o'clock."

D'Arcy galloped—galloped as fast as the knight who galloped "away, away, away," although there was no lady on the tower to wave to him "her lily-white hand."

The quick pace at which he rode accorded agreeably with the hurry of his mind—not that D'Arcy was unused to this species of mental turmoil: his life had been an active one, and a spirit of recklessness had led him into many an intricate path. Some people twice live their lives. *Their* every-day existence is one of romance and novelty; and it is inconceivable the variety of events and interests in which one person may find himself forced to take a part: there are others, again, who go through the world so steadily, so unconscious of the very natures of half of those who compose it, that they may be said to sleep their lives away. Well, I do not know; I am old now, and I have passed a strange and a stirring life; but I have sometimes envied such men their calmer hours, their absence of rest-

lessness, and the avoidance of that breathless amount of excitement which wearies the spirit at last, and gives it a longing for repose—like the traveller in the desert, desiring the water which eludes his search.

Few joys, indeed, can compensate for the endless anxiety attendant upon a life of excitement, and the mental exhaustion which is its certain consequence. Like gambling, an existence of this sort becomes fatal; you cannot return to quietude: if you do, the ennui of an ill-regulated mind fills up, and horribly, the vacuum. But so it is; and some there are who never repose, whilst others are mere active dormice, capable of enjoying all things that can be enjoyed, and getting on in years in a most luxurious manner, refreshing themselves continually with their own excess of contentment: then, there are those who are never calm, with whom the earth is so busy a stage, and their part in it so filled up, so wearying, so harassing, so variable, so wild, that now and then they long to barter life,

"To be trodden under foot, and mingled but with dust,"

for the sake of peace and quietness at last!

D'Arcy thought of Violet Woodville. She was the one thing prominent in the chaos of his meditations. What plan to pursue to see her, if ever, again?—or, to quit England, and leave her to forget him—or——D'Arcy's horse, and himself, and his reflections were checked in their course by the turnpike on Putney Bridge, and also by a gig, occupied by a couple who had precedence of him. D'Arcy was too near this vehicle not to distinguish its occupiers, and to discover an undeniable side-view of Mr. Woodville's face, as he turned to pay the gate-keeper.

"Mr. Woodville!" cried D'Arcy.

"Why, it's you, Mr. d'Arcy," returned Woodville, making way with his horse: "I did not hope to meet you on this road."

"I am riding down here on business. I am going ———" D'Arcy hesitated: it may seem strange; but so it was, that he had not the power to finish his sentence—he could not say, "I am going to leave England to-morrow."

"You are going ———?"

"Yes," replied D'Arcy, absently; "yes. But where are *you* going?"

"Oh, we—I and my wife are going on a visit, to see a sick friend of ours."

"Poor Mr. M'Gory, whom you must recollect at Covent Garden," broke in Mrs. Woodville; "he performed Macbeth and King Lear, and was so famous, you know, for the way in which he said

"Blow winds, and crack your cheeks;"

and now, poor man! he is laid up with the gout, and cannot live, we fear; and he is an old friend of ours, and I and Woodville thought we would drive down, and see him. Violet's left at home; for we ——"

"Violet's at home?" repeated D'Arcy.

"Yes, you see there's not room for her; besides——."

"Oh, it is no great thing to leave her to amuse herself for half a day," interrupted Mr. Woodville; "we shall be back by ten at night, and it will be such a comfort to poor M'Gory to see us: he has got the snuggest little cottage at Richmond, as big as a nutshell, and just the article for him."

"Well, then, I will not detain you," cried D'Arcy. "Good morning, Mrs. Woodville."

"Good day to you, sir," said Woodville.

"I hope you will have a pleasant ride, Mr. d'Arcy," rejoined Mrs. Woodville; "and we hope you will come and see us soon."

"What the d——l must you needs add that for?" said Woodville, sharply, to his wife, as D'Arcy and his horse vanished from view.

"Don't be cross," replied Mrs. Woodville; "one must be civil sometimes—besides, one is not to live without hearing people's voices, I suppose; he is not a vulture or a hippopotamus, to eat us up, Mr. Woodville. How the wind blows my bonnet! Bless me! look at all those sheep; why, what business have they in the high road? This is the high road, is it not, Charles?"

"To be sure it is."

"Do, pray, take care; I am so afraid of the horse taking fright at these sheep. What's the good of all that new police, if a whole drove of sheep are allowed to be on the high road, with only two boys to look after them—shameful! Oh, dear! don't whip him, Mr. Woodville, for fear."

"Be a peaceable woman for once," ejaculated poor Woodville, "and never mind the sheep, and I will mind the horse."

The sheep had not disturbed D'Arcy or his steed. On they went till they reached Tarsley-house, and D'Arcy was speedily shown into the library of the Minister, who was in the act of locking some of the important red boxes.

"Give that to the messenger directly," said the noble lord to the servant who announced our hero.

D'Arcy was obliged to attend to all that was said to him, and the alacrity of his comprehension, and his undisguised intention to make his visit as short as possible, were equally agreeable to the Minister. "He quite understands I have not time to say things twice over, and that a long visit is a great private nuisance," said the peer to himself. "I hope to heavens he does not see what a hurry I am in!" thought D'Arcy; "but I shall just have time—or if I could overtake that messenger, I could get into the chaise—but it is too late—that mare of mine is touched in the wind—fool that I was to buy her!—rascal to have sold her to me!"

"You have so clearly expressed yourself, my Lord, that I believe I am already capable of transmitting the sense of your instruction to

Lord ——; and now, I shall be able to leave town by twelve o'clock to-morrow, which will enable me to reach——"

D'Arcy's eye wandered to the large clock on a lapis lazuli table.

"Why, I am aware you are not a person to lose time on the road," said the Minister, smiling condescendingly.

A few more words were wasted in thanks and grateful speeches from D'Arcy, and amiable expressions from his patron.

Mounted once more, D'Arcy flew as breathless as his horse, with their mutual speed.

He dismounted on reaching his lodgings, and jumped into a hack cab.

"Run with these letters to Vere Street—there is time yet. If any one calls, say, in an hour I am sure to be at home. Have you executed all the commissions? And go to Newman's — the post-horses must be at the door, and the carriage packed. Don't forget the books, by ten to-morrow," were D'Arcy's last words to his servant.

To be sure, if we could but foresee the events of the next twenty-four hours, how the consumption of breath might be spared!

"Drive your best, my friend, and I will tip you double," said D'Arcy to the cabman.

"That's a gemman, Sir; you shall see as I knows how to make him start a point," responded his companion.

The cabman stopped by his directions at the end of the street where the Woodvilles lived, and he proceeded to the house on foot.

"Is any one at home, Mrs. Hummings?" said D'Arcy, insinuatingly, when that worthy woman opened the door to him.

"No, Sir!"

"No!"—D'Arcy's heart beat—"No! but some of the family?"

"Well, Sir—but I am ashamed to let you in."

"Oh, then, *she is* here," exclaimed D'Arcy, as he gave the usual fee to this tractable she Cerberus, and moved on into the passage.

Violet was sitting alone, busy with her own thoughts, and they all centred round one point. She was not sorry to have been left at home by her parents; no one is sorry to be alone when the mind is much occupied. But the Woodvilles had now been gone some hours, and solitude always gives a melancholy turn to our reflections.

Perhaps, too, our ideas become half exhausted, from the time we study them, and then they assume that fainter hue which I have before spoken of, when things seem almost unreal, and we sigh over baseless apprehension and a vague distrust. Violet thought of D'Arcy, and dwelt upon him more than ever, for more than ever she loved him. She sat at the open window recalling the past, and dreaming over bygone moments.

Sometimes her eyes wandered to the chair, or to the table, or to some article of furniture which D'Arcy had touched; and her eye dwelt upon it.

There is nothing like love for bestowing a charm on the merest trifle. When the eye falls upon the most insignificant object where a beloved hand has rested, it is the same, as dear and as sacred to us as if the grave in its solemnity had closed o'er the parent, the sister, or the fondest friend, whose form we have remembered as hovering there. Oh, there is nothing so reverential as the endearing tie that binds to the commonest spot, if love has trodden there, its most unheeded step!—and the stones of the very pavement are hallowed

and sacred in our sight, if the foot of one we love has pressed them.

The evening was drawing to its close—Violet did not choose to send for lights: she preferred remaining by the open window, keeping watch over the retiring day at that hour—

> "When pensive Twilight, in her dusky car,
> Comes slowly on to meet the evening star."

She looked out on the heavens. Her view was a limited one—to gaze on the stars in a house in London streets does not sound very romantic, but the blue sky was equally above her, and its vast expanse is so soothing to a contemplative mind, it gives so wide a field for thought, and there is so much hope in that blue vault of an hereafter, dwelling for ever unmoved above us, as one thing fixed and immutable! "Shall I meet him there?" thought Violet—her mind's eye fixed on futurity. "There shall we meet, or must I part from him on earth and cease to hope?"—

> "If that high world which lies beyond
> Our own, surviving love endears,
> If there the cherished heart be found,
> The eye the same, except in tears."
>
> BYRON.

The solitude she was in, enabled Violet to distinguish easily the tread of hasty footsteps, —could it be her parents, returned home without her having heard them arrive? She rose, and the next moment the door of the apartment flew open, and D'Arcy appeared before her.

"Mr. d'Arcy!" exclaimed Violet, in astonishment.

"Yes, I am come to see you once again; but perhaps for the last time," answered D'Arcy, as he advanced into the room.

The evening light was gradually obscuring the apartment, and to D'Arcy the only visible object in it was Violet Woodville, standing, and uncertain how to act. Extreme pleasure was the most natural feeling at first beholding her lover, and it prevented her reflecting upon the impropriety of his visit at that hour, and when she was alone. Violet did not ask him to sit down, and she was yet bewildered by his presence,—when D'Arcy approached, and hurriedly addressed her; his manner was passionate and eager, and his face was flushed, although he seemed fatigued.

"Do I offend you," he said, "by being here? But, if I do, you will forgive me, for I am come to bid you farewell,—and for a long time; perhaps for ever!"

"Oh, Mr. d'Arcy!" said Violet, reproachfully, but turning pale at the same time, "you are joking."

"I wish that I were, but it is no joke.—I am speaking in sad and sober earnest; so, Violet, you will forgive my abrupt intrusion, will you not?" continued D'Arcy, with gentleness.

But this announcement overpowered Violet; she burst into tears, as she had done once before on a like occasion. In vain she tried to speak: she sat down, and hid her face in her hands, and sobbed convulsively.

"Dearest!" said D'Arcy, while he knelt at her feet, "do not grieve so for me, or if you do,—Violet, I cannot bear to see those tears, I shall weep too; and I shall suffer more than you do. Violet, give me that little hand," and D'Arcy forced away the fingers that were stemming the flow of Violet's tears; he took the hand and kissed away the drops.

But even this action passed unheeded by

Violet, and her bosom seemed bursting with its anguish. D'Arcy waited till she was calmer, and it was not till the violence of her grief was exhausted that she spoke.

"I am ashamed, Mr. d'Arcy, that you should have seen this; my folly is too great, but,—but is it true?"

D'Arcy, in reply to this interrogatory, without circumlocution explained the necessity for his instant departure.

"You will return?"

"No,—why should I?"

"Is this, then, your affection?" asked Violet, almost with anger.

"Listen to me," answered D'Arcy, as he still knelt at her feet. "I am going to leave you; and the bitterness of my despair will ever be unknown to you,—your mind cannot comprehend the wretchedness of mine now. Your single regret at my absence will be as nothing, compared to my endless sorrow, which will live while I live,—for life itself is old with me, and you are all to me,—all—my youth,—my hope,—my every joy,—the only thing my soul desires,—the only one that I rejoice in,—I

cannot look forward,—I have exhausted every charm the world possesses,—only you are my world,—not this one, Violet, but a better one, and I am going to resign you! Do you hear me, Violet? look at me, dearest, and speak to me with your eyes, at least!"

Violet looked at her lover, and his mournful countenance seemed to give assurance to his words.

"You have broken my heart," was her earnest and sad reply, "and you cannot do more!"

"Do you love me so well?"

"Oh, yes."

"Fly with me, then!" exclaimed D'Arcy, with sudden fire; "fly with me,—give me the only proof of love a woman can give; you shall not repent it,—I will adore you while I live, and if I die, I think my spirit would break its bonds to watch over you! Fly with me, and in the universe,—which will be a chaos without you, —you will be all in all to me; I could not have another hope,—I could not know another happiness. Fly with me, and I will teach you the boundlessness of my affection,—fly with me, and be worshipped by a heart that owns you

for its very religion! Fly with me, dearest, I will for ever kiss the earth that your foot shall tread upon. My own Violet, dearest, dearest one! oh, have you heard me, have you listened to my beseeching cry?

"Tempt me not," Violet exclaimed, "it is cruel in you, and you are becoming my worst enemy." The agitation of her voice denoted the intense pain of mind that she was enduring; and her beautiful face, beautiful still with its streaming tears, was bent over D'Arcy, with the expression of an angel pleading for compassion!

"If you know me, as you say you do, could I ever look on the world again, when I had known disgrace? and my father, and my mother, to bring them to hear my name with shame! my poor father,—oh never, never!" screamed Violet, endeavouring to extricate the hands that D'Arcy forcibly detained.

"It shall be no shame, then; all should be done," cried D'Arcy, "you should be my wife, —my wife, do you hear me, dearest? all shall be sacrificed,—why do I say sacrificed! humbly offered to you; for you, nothing would be a sacrifice, did I resign my existence to obtain you,—

you cannot doubt I would do it gladly—say you know it to be so, my beloved!" said D'Arcy, imploringly; and at that moment he spoke the truth, and its powerful evidence carried conviction to the mind of the unfortunate girl; yet she answered him with determination.

"Oh, no! young as I am, my experience is sufficient to save me from that misery,—I your wife! you the husband of an Opera-dancer!—no anguish can be so great as to become the object of your contempt and despisal; and, as your wife, you would contemn me more for the ruin I had brought upon you, than you could if I should forsake my home, my parents, and my honour, to follow you. No, Mr. d'Arcy, I love you so, that I would not marry you,—you see I know you," said Violet with a wretched smile.

"Generous angel! believe me, you are mistaken; you never have appreciated my affection, and are incapable of probing the depths of my devotion."

"But, in cooler moments, you have explained all to me. Your position, your views, your fortune—and I have weighed well every little word you have ever spoken. If you think, at

this moment, that I am mistaken in my views of what yours would be, were you to marry me, trust to me, that I know you better than you know yourself. Is it really to-morrow that you depart?" asked Violet, with a faltering voice.

"To-morrow; but you must go too, indeed you must—you would not abandon me, Violet? Can I say more?—I have offered all that man can, and now I kneel, and I ask you for your pity—Forsake me not!" cried D'Arcy, imploringly, and he buried his face in the lap of Violet, while his quick drawn breath and broken sentences betrayed his agitation.

"Do not kneel to me—leave me alone, for God's sake!—D'Arcy, do you hear me?" said Violet Woodville, and with her slender hands she tried to raise her lover from his kneeling posture.

What a world of misery was tearing the hearts of these two persons! What passions were contending in that little sitting-room, the abode of cheerfulness hitherto, and of family comfort! How the very furniture of the room, with its air of locality, was in ill accordance with these striving spirits! And when scenes like these occur in our own homes, they seem such

a strange profanation! and, hereafter, the remembrance of them stalks like a ghost across the hearth of our dwellings.

Oh! who that has a heart will not lament over the grief of such moments—the parting of those whose existence is each bound up in the other's, for at this moment it seems so; and to feel they may—

> "Not meet again! what tongue can tell
> The pang of hearts that love so well,
> At such a chill unwelcome breath,
> Like vapour from the shades of death!"

D'Arcy recovered himself, but he saw his advantage. He pleaded all that passion urged him to—he prayed, he wept, he adjured her to follow him—what did he not say—for,

> "What will tongue not dare
> When hearts go wrong?"

But it is not enough to destroy the force of virtue in a young and upright mind, guided by an excellent understanding. The feelings may be rent, but the very nature of a man's violence in such a case, alarms the timidity of one that is pure-minded, and gives the power as well as the desire to resist such entreaties.

Violet Woodville mildly persisted in her refusal to follow the fortunes of D'Arcy, but her

heart was breaking while she spoke. And then he changed his tone, and reproached her with selfishness and with deception — yes, he exclaimed, "You have deceived me. I put your affection to the test, and what has become of it? The world's opinion, forsooth, stands up before it. You wrong no one, but you may wrong yourself; and where is your boasted love for me? You say my absence will grieve you, and to me you prefer your parents. What have they done for you more than the laws of nature have forced upon them? What if they have loved you—do not all parents love their children?—and when they have lost you, will their sorrow come up to the tenth part of my despair, when I am alone, with my memory of you for my only pleasure, and your abandonment for the solace of my unhappiness? Oh, that I could despise the heartlessness that mocks my anguish!" And D'Arcy, striking his clenched hand against his brow, paced the room with a tempest in his bosom.

"But I would brave it all," said Violet, following her lover's footsteps;— "The world's contempt — I could be pointed at for you, D'Arcy—I would leave my home, were it ne-

cessary; I would beg for you — believe me, D'Arcy:" but D'Arcy answered her not.

"I would encounter disgrace; but my father and his misery, his affection—to know I had so rewarded it—but, for you, D'Arcy, I would do it all;—and the upbraidings of my conscience — I would stifle them, for you.—But would my God ever forgive me if I deserted my dear, dear father?—D'Arcy, do you hear me?"

Violet appealed to her lover in a tone of anguish that obliged him to turn towards her: but the cold sneer, which could blight the countenance of D'Arcy, hung in withering coldness on his features, and that was his only reply.

"And is it you, D'Arcy, who can show so little kindness! This is worse and worse, and I cannot survive it," exclaimed Violet, but meekly;—sinking upon a seat in utter dejection.

The unkindness of D'Arcy terrified her. He beheld in her countenance the nature of her feelings, and, restored to tenderness by this means, he once more flung himself upon her generosity.

"Do you think," he asked, "my love can do

nothing for your happiness? How am I to believe you care for me, if you place so little faith in my affection? Oh, Violet, can you not conceive some happiness in having me ever devoted to you, and anxious to save you from all evil? Bound to you by gratitude, and a passion that has not its equal—and watching over you as if you were my young child, but dearer far than all human ties could make you? Can you picture nothing to yourself but misery, if you go through life with me? My dearest one,—my love,—my only joy—Oh, listen to me, and think how I have loved!—is it not true? I would not always have asked this sacrifice.—Did I not tell you to marry Stanmore? Did I not force myself to see you no more: and if now I am weak, and if I am grown so selfish that I dare to ask so much, am I not to be pitied? Oh, I have many faults, but if I ever knew virtue, it has been while loving you, for I could go mad ..... Violet, I will not, I cannot part from you." D'Arcy seized the hands of Violet, and covered them with convulsive kisses: "Be mine—my wife—any thing—but be mine. Oh! by what prayer shall I adjure you!"

By this last appeal Violet's heart was almost vanquished; but she was still checked by the feminine delicacy which ruled her character so conspicuously, and which made her feel that, independently of the laws of duty, the eloping with her lover was an open act of impropriety that her nature shrank from. To an understanding constituted like hers, such a step would have been one (even if to be sanctioned by a marriage) that she would naturally have turned from with dismay; but to fly with him to be his mistress only,—no wonder that her heart, gentle and confiding as it was, and with its deep tenderness, should require to undergo all the ordeal of D'Arcy's anguish before it could relent for such a purpose.

She was not misled, or allured by his offer of marrying her: she never proposed to herself to accept the offer, and placed at once to its right account the sacrifice D'Arcy was ready to make. Violet had never forgotten his conversation with Harcourt, at a time when she did not know him.

Subdued at length by her compassion, but virtuous to the last, Violet flung herself at the

feet of D'Arcy, and in trembling accents asked him for his forbearance.

"Have mercy on me; ask me no more, or, if you do, I must consent to fly with you; my courage will abandon me, but do not think that I can live in disgrace—never; I must die; but I will go with you, if you require it, now, D'Arcy," continued Violet, more tremulously; "I am doing what is wrong—I shall hate myself some day. Oh!" continued the unhappy girl, "would you leave me, and save me from such horrible disgrace. Think of my parents, and I am their only child, and they believe me spotless; and they will have to hear that I have fled from them to wander as your mistress! Oh, horrible!—Was I born for such a fate as this?"

Violet hid her face. She was still kneeling at the feet of D'Arcy, and, regardless of his endeavours to raise her from the ground, she seemed almost unconscious of his vicinity; but her situation did not move his heart in the way it might have done. He was reckless then, and could only pour forth vows and prayers.

"I will go—I will go!" murmured Violet.

In an ecstacy of delight, D'Arcy would have clasped her in his arms; she made no effort to prevent him, and then he discovered that she had fainted!

D'Arcy was horror-struck: all his feelings underwent a revulsion. Men are not accustomed to see women faint, and it always inspires them with alarm; but D'Arcy knew that what he beheld was his work. When he entered that room, Violet Woodville was there in her bright beauty, his own *beau idéal* of woman's loveliness, wanting nothing in his eyes—

> " Ni les lis, ni les roses—
> Ni le mélange exquis des plus aimables choses,
> Ni ce charme secret dont l'œil est enchanté,
> Ni la grace plus belle encore que la beauté,"—

and now he beheld her pale, cold, and senseless!—And he it was who had stamped those features with the hue of death, and so bruised an angelic spirit that it had sunk beneath his violence!

D'Arcy was suddenly restored to calmness: he felt then the force of his own misconduct, and was dismayed at the ungenerous use he might have made of the advantage he had gained. He felt certain that, except under

the high-wrought spell that he had been employing, nothing would have induced Violet to consent to become his mistress; and at this moment, when the fever was over, his very love upbraided him for his selfishness.

"She is not fit to be betrayed in this way; she may hate me for it," said D'Arcy, inwardly; "I can now vanquish myself—be it so; she shall not be mine at such a cost; she shall not reproach me with the crime of her seduction. I will leave her—I will persuade her no more; the fault would be *all* mine."

D'Arcy employed himself in restoring Violet to consciousness. He took her to the open window, and bathed her temples with eau de Cologne. She recovered slowly, and when she did so, he was bending over her, hardly less pale and cold than she herself was. He was not the same creature he had been while lately raving in the delirium of passion; and if his feelings were as deep, they appeared to have assumed another form. When he thought Violet had nearly revived, and saw she began to remember the cause of her over-excitement, D'Arcy led her gently to speak upon the subject.

"I am so very miserable," said Violet; "but you are not going to leave me for ever?—Surely I have been dreaming that?"

"My darling love, forgive me," answered D'Arcy. "When you think of me hereafter, it must not be in anger; and do not think of me—I do not ask it, love. Be happy, if you can: it will render me, perhaps, less wretched. You see, Violet, I am not so bad," continued D'Arcy, trying to smile, and he kissed her hands fervently; and then, before she was aware of his intention, he quitted the room.

But when the door had closed upon him, Violet Woodville cried out—"Gone!" and a wild scream hovered upon her lips Her heart swelled with a degree of sorrow which has nothing in common with words or with tears; her utterance was choked, and stifling sobs were heaving her bosom with their bursting throes. She flung herself upon the floor, and would have died then, for hers was the grief that brings recklessness of all things else in the world;—her despair was infinite! D'Arcy was gone! Oh, what a burden life seemed! and how frantic was that wretchedness, unable to struggle with such an excess of grief!

It was such a helpless, hopeless sorrow—to see no more the cherished object of her deep affection! The darkness of a grave would have seemed less appalling than this curtain of woe cast over all that so feeling a heart held most dear.

To live but for one, to dream of him, to speak of him with rapture, to thrill when the music of his name is heard, to know what heaven is in his presence; to exist by his remembrance, to listen for his very breath, because his breathing is more to your existence than your own; to worship his faults, to know them, and to love them with infatuation; to devote your whole nature, your aspirations, your hopes, your thoughts, your whole soul,—to surrender all, to cast all at the shrine of one object, and to know that suddenly it is withdrawn from you, and you may never see it more;—oh, reader, if thou hast been spared such an anguish, think not that thy burden in life has been great,—be not misled, overrate not your afflictions, or rashly compare them with such as these. In a different sphere, with more resources, with companions more suitable to her,—with admirers, with parents,

with society more fitted to a mind like hers, which rose above its sphere of action, Violet Woodville would not have experienced the intense and overwhelming sentiment which shipwrecked her happiness so utterly. She would have had more causes to distract her attention; the greater variety, and the more splendid circumstances of her existence, would have stood in the way of the single-heartedness of her passion. That, in higher life, affections like hers are formed, there can be no doubt; but the great world exercises a command over those who live in it, which it never relinquishes. We may hate it, despise it; we often do, but, though we would abandon it, the world will cling to us; and with an iron sway, and often, perhaps, a wholesome one, it grapples with our best and our worst feelings. We fear its irony, we so dread its pity, we dare not be unlike all others,—for who is exempt from yearning to seem as he sees all others are, to rejoice sometimes like his fellows? and variety, the world's variety, when we are so situated that we fall in with it, comes betwixt us and that vivid, overpowering, uncaring devotion which rages and devours the springs of

life itself, when it finds a home in a bosom like Violet Woodville's, not counterbalanced by the ten thousand events of a more selfish existence.

From the relative positions of Violet Woodville and her lover, all that more immediately concerned her and the occurrences of daily life, had become either circumstances of no import, or grievously irksome; they were not in common with D'Arcy, and she could find nothing to destroy the spell that was gathering round her. Violet literally liked Lord Stanmore, at last, only because he lived in the same set, and was one of those with whom D'Arcy associated.

It is always bad enough, under the best auspices, to lose at last a happiness we have created for ourselves, and in which we are blindly trusting—"Perdre un bonheur rêvé, renoncer à tout un avenir, est une souffrance plus aigue que celle causée par la ruine d'une félicité ressentie, quelque complète qu'elle ait été." * And then, too, when we are young, we have so much to give, so much energy to prostrate at the altar of our misery! Violet's

* Balzac.

affection, without knowing security, had acquired that sleepy, confiding belief in the duration of happiness, such as it was, on which we all rely, more or less. This reliance is part of our nature, and forms, as it seems to me, one of its mysteries.

"Il n'y a point de hasard; tout est espérance, où punition, où prévoyance, où récompense." *

The lamps were lighted, and it was quite dusk when D'Arcy left the house of the Woodvilles; about ten doors onwards this street was intersected by another, and for D'Arcy to pursue his way it was necessary to go over the cross-road.

It so happened that two hack cabs were at this moment disputing the pass; one of the drivers conceived his vehicle to have been injured by the bad driving of his adversary, and with a plentiful flow of slang they were blackguarding each other on the spot.

"Hold your clapper, there, and don't kick up no bobbery with me, or I'll dish your prad nicely for you, my boy; don't give me your clankers, and sneak on, I say."

* Voltaire.

The rejoinder being much to the same purport, there seemed little chance of a peaceable termination of the dispute.

At this moment D'Arcy's attention was forcibly called to the disturbance, and in an imperious tone he desired the drivers to move out of the way, in order that he might pass; at the same minute a man, who was being driven in one of the vehicles, put forth his head, and mingled his remonstrances against this stoppage in the street.

"Settle your quarrels as you will, but if you don't drive me on, I will give you both over to the police. Did not I tell you I had not a a minute to lose? drive me to the Burlington *directly*," exclaimed the inmate of the cab, most vehemently.

"Very well, Sir, you shall be bang up in a crack, only I a'n't such a woolly crown to let that 'ere yelping whisker-splitter think as I am to be bammed because he is more up in the stirrups than I, and I am blowed if I don't—"

"How long, Sir, am I to be detained here by your drunken quarrel?" cried D'Arcy, with

an angry burst of passion. The scene, so out of harmony with his feelings, made him give way to his temper.

"Mr. D'Arcy it certainly is," said the unlucky inside passenger of the cab, as the light of the lamp fell upon D'Arcy's face. His recognizer, however, did not appear well known to D'Arcy, or at all events he walked on without acknowledging him. He had matters of business to transact, and, late as the hour was, D'Arcy felt they must be concluded before the morning; and in order to write letters, he went to the Travellers'.

CHAPTER III.

"Untaught the useful lessons sadly given
By that time-honoured sage—Adversity,
The rash, impetuous, and misguided youth
Resents at once the slightest injury—
Unmindful of the consequences, seeks revenge—
Repenting, when too late, the deadly evils
Wrought by the pride that brooks not contradiction."

OLD PLAY.

"Duels, to be respected, must be fatal:
I am not bloody-minded, but I hate all
Parade of valour—playing with edged tools,
The scorn of brave men, and the boast of fools.
There may be an exception; but at school
We learn that the exception proves the rule."

ANON.

ABOUT nine o'clock on the evening previous to D'Arcy's intended departure, Lord Stanmore was sitting in a room in the Burlington Hotel. His cabriolet had been waiting in the street some time; he was going to join a party of his friends who were dining at Richmond, and he knew, although it was then nine o'clock, that he was still likely to find them not dispersed. For the twentieth time within the last hour Lord Stanmore rang the bell violently.

"Is my servant not yet returned?" he demanded of the waiter.

"No, my Lord—stay, my Lord, I think I hear his voice on the stairs now;—Mr. Cramp is here, my Lord," said the waiter, making way for a very smart gentleman in pumps bespattered with mud, a blue and silver waistcoat, with a gold chain and a frock-coat, some inches shorter in the skirt than most other people's: his disordered hair, the moisture on Mr. Cramp's face, and his hurried gait, did not quite correspond with his *degagé* toilette, and he commenced making excuses for not being within at an earlier hour.

"Sir!" exclaimed Lord Stanmore in an angry tone (his temper was not as docile as it used to be)—"Sir, what is the meaning of my being detained here because you choose to disobey my orders?"

"I beg your pardon, my Lord, it has been owing to an haccident, my Lord, intirely."

"Nonsense! I told you to be here by eight o'clock; you knew I wanted those cigars; this is the second time, but it shall be the last, that I have been disappointed in getting those cursed cigars, owing to your ill conduct."

"My Lord, I assure you it is not my fault; I got into a cabriolet, and another driver ran against the wheel of the cab, and there was a dispute." Lord Stanmore made a gesture of impatience.

"I don't believe you. Bring the cigars, if you please, now."

"Certainly, my Lord; but I hope your Lordship will be good enough to credit my word; if not, there's Mr. d'Arcy, my Lord, and he saw me."

"Mr. d'Arcy is not in London."

"He is, indeed, my Lord; I saw him; your Lordship can ask him," continued Mr. Cramp, disappearing in search of the cigars. On his return with them he repeated to Lord Stanmore that Mr. d'Arcy would vouch for his story not being a fabricated excuse. "It was just up at Bayswater, my Lord, where I have been sometimes with messages that your Lordship was particular in, to Mrs. Woodville, my Lord."

"And you did not see Mr. d'Arcy there, sir?" asked Lord Stanmore, with a low voice and a flashing eye.

"Yes, it was not above fifty yards from their

house," Mr. Cramp eagerly replied, "when these drunken fellows set up a row, and I looked out for the police, which made me notice Mr. d'Arcy coming out of Mr. Woodville's; I did not know it was him at first, till I heard his voice speaking to the cab-men to let him pass; he will remember it, I am sure, my Lord, and will justify me to your Lordship."

"Are you positive that you saw Mr. d'Arcy coming out of the Woodvilles' house?"

"I am full positive of it, my Lord; if your Lordship think, for the sake of hexcuse, I would tell you a falsehood, why then, my Lord,——" said Mr. Cramp, drawing himself up in a dignified attitude.

"I should like to know how it is," (Lord Stanmore was trying to speak calmly,) "it only being once, certainly not oftener, that I sent you with a message to Mr. Woodville, and it is long ago, you should remember so very well which of those houses belonged to the family—at dusk, too, and when you were not near enough to read the numbers?"

"Oh, my Lord, why it did so happen that I knew the house particularly well, because I

took the grouse your Lordship sent this very morning to Mr. Woodville; my business lay in that direction, and John was in a great hurry about a little matter of his own; so, as I was going that way, to haccommodate him, I took the grouse into the homnibus with me, and got out and left it myself at Mr. Woodville's, by which way I happened to know the house again; it is a himitation rose-wood painted door; all the other doors are different. Mr. Woodville was not at home or his lady, honly Miss Woodville; and Mr. and Mrs. Woodville was gone out for the whole day, the woman said that let me in, and that they was not to be home till very late; and that was true, for I met them both in a one-horse gig here in Park Lane not ten minutes back."

"What, after you saw Mr. d'Arcy?"

"Oh, Mr. d'Arcy must have been gone on his way for half an hour before I got to Park Lane, for when the man did pretend to be driving me on, the other fellow he had quarrelled with raced after him, and so then I jumped out and called the police, and——"

"That's enough: you are, however, clear in

having made no mistake about Mr. d'Arcy?" repeated Lord Stanmore, in an accent that was almost tremulous.

"The lamp fell on his face, my Lord, I could not make a herror, and I heard his voice, telling the men to get out of his way. Is your Lordship's cabriolet to wait?"

"No, send it away—stay—yes, let it wait."

In about half an hour Lord Stanmore gave orders for his groom to drive with a letter to —— Street, and to wait for the answer.

The letter was directed to G. d'Arcy, Esq.

The groom soon returned, saying he had left the letter, that Mr. d'Arcy was not yet come in, that his servant expected him to be late, as he was going to set off for abroad next day at six o'clock, and had a great many things to do which would occupy him in different parts of the town.

"Abroad—going abroad?" said Lord Stanmore, thoughtfully.

"Yes, my Lord, so his servant said."

"Oh, you must have misunderstood him."

"No, my Lord; and there was nothing but portmanteaus and packages in the passage, and tradespeople. There was Mr. Occult, as

is your Lordship's tailor, and a man with Hindy-rubber cloaks: it seemed like going somewhere in a sudden."

"To-morrow, at six o'clock?"

"Yes, my Lord, the servant said so; it was Mr. d'Arcy's own valley I saw."

"Umph! you may go, drive my cab round: be in the way with it, if you are wanted."

Left alone, Lord Stanmore remained lost in reflection. He considered for a long time, and several times his hand was upon the bell, but he did not quite pull it. At length he did pull it, and sent for his cab. He left the hotel, leaving word where he was going, and that if any letter should come for him it must be brought to him immediately.

About one in the morning D'Arcy returned to his lodgings. The passage gave nearly all the evidence of the departure that Lord Stanmore's groom had so eloquently described; only "Mr. Occult and the Hindy-rubber" gentlemen, and several more of that species, had given way to the suggestions of impatience, and instead of themselves, their foremen were in waiting as their representatives.

D'Arcy's tables were strewed with letters fastened with wafers; while boxes and leathern cases covered the floor.

With a tired hand he proceeded to open some of these wafered missives—that is to say, bills; and to listen, or to appear to listen, to the details of his servant: "I will light the lamp, Sir—Mr. Occult has left his account with me, and I have promised to give it to you—and Mr. Spring said he had made some little repairs to the case of your new gun, Sir, that were not in the bill, he thought, Sir;—and I took the box to have the Bramah's lock put.—Will you have something, Sir?" asked D'Arcy's servant, interrupting himself.

"Something! What?" answered D'Arcy, sternly.

"You look so ill, Sir, I thought you were fatigued, Sir."

"Oh! go on—did you go to the right watchmaker's!"

"Yes, Sir—but he says he ought to be keeping the watch a day or two, so I brought it back; and I went to Treuttel and Wurtz, and they are to send the French books this evening, and if they were not able to get

them, they will forward them to you by the Foreign-office, and I called at Andrews' about the Quarterly, and I paid the bill at Hookham's.—Oh, and here are the letter covers, Sir, and I have seen about the patent lamp; and I left your message at Tattersall's, with a man there that I know; and I have been about the carriage, and spoke to Barker as well as Hobson—and all your letters and notes, I have seen to their being sent, and—Oh, Sir, here is a letter from Lord Stanmore; his groom brought it, Sir, a couple of hours back."

"Give me the letter," said D'Arcy, and with surprise and impatience, he tore off the envelope and began reading.

"Madame Vestris went to Calais yesterday, so I left the note, Sir; and Lord Arthur is not at Knightsbridge-barracks. Oh! and the pistols are all right now, Sir; and here is the old road-book I have found, Sir, and the map is not torn; and all the other things, I need not give you the trouble of mentioning to you, but I think I have seen to nearly every thing—I went into Bond-street about the razors and—"

"Leave me, Howell, now," said D'Arcy, "I have something to attend to."

"Yes, Sir," answered Howell; but he was attached to his master, and his worn appearance still attracted his notice as he left the room.

There was nothing very restoring in the letter D'Arcy had just opened. It was a charge made by Lord Stanmore, accusing him of having broken his promise in again attempting to see Miss Woodville, and calling upon him, if he could, to deny it. In conclusion, he declared himself ready to give the satisfaction of a gentleman, should D'Arcy think proper to resent his present interference. It was, in short, a most angry letter, couched in the cold language of one trying not to appear angry. If any man could read with perfect calmness a summons like this to life or death, as it might be, that man was George d'Arcy. He was endowed with both physical and moral courage to a most unusual extent, and was incapable of a nervous pang. In fact, so well was D'Arcy aware of his own nerves and his moral inaccessibility to fear, that he rather felt himself gifted with an undue advantage over his fellow-men, of which he would not for the world have boasted; and now, at this

moment, he felt careless of life, so that there was no hesitation in his proceedings, as there might have been at a happier period. He wrote two notes, one to Lord Stanmore, stating, in few words, that his departure on that morning could not be delayed, that he had no doubt of both being able to find seconds; and requested Lord Stanmore to meet him at five o'clock. D'Arcy named the spot. The other note was to a friend, an acquaintance rather—to ask him to be his second. These dispatched, D'Arcy threw himself upon a couch, desired the light to be withdrawn, and that he might not be disturbed for one hour.

His orders were obeyed: at the expiration of the hour Howell entered the room.

"Oh!" exclaimed D'Arcy, passing his hand across his brow, "Bring me a light; and now for the letter you have in your hand."

D'Arcy read it—it was from Lord Stanmore, who promised to find a second, if possible, so as to be on the ground at the hour D'Arcy required, five o'clock—it was then half-past three.

"Get me some fresh ink," said D'Arcy. "If

any one asks for me, show him up. You may go to bed, Howell, only leave word to admit any one, with some servant below."

D'Arcy had few near relations; there was no mother, father, or brother, to whom to bequeath his final injunctions, or to whose tenderness he desired to make a last appeal: but he had some friends. He might be inclined at this moment to value friendship lightly. Almost his most intimate friend had requested to have the opportunity of shooting him that very morning. D'Arcy wrote only two letters, one of business, and one to Violet Woodville.—These were only to be sent in case of his death. A servant ushered in Sir Lewis G.

The table at which D'Arcy wrote was littered with papers. Not choosing that the address of the letter to Violet should fall under the eye of a stranger, he had intended to inclose it in an envelope, addressed to Howell, on whom he could depend, with directions for its deliverance only in case of his death. But, on the abrupt entrance of Sir Lewis G. (for the servant remembered D'Arcy's orders, that however late, any one asking for him was to be

admitted), D'Arcy caught up the letter to Violet, as he thought, and hastily put it under its cover. At the same instant, his eye fell upon the minute-hand of his watch, which lay before him: he saw it was past four; he felt he had no time to lose—he sealed the envelope, and did not discover, that instead of inclosing the letter addressed to Miss Woodville, he had taken up another which he had written in the morning to a friend at Doncaster, and which he had forgotten altogether; it was sealed—he did not, at the instant, take the unnecessary precaution, as he conceived, of examining the address.

"Mr. d'Arcy," said Sir Lewis, "you are acquainted, I know, with the nature of the errand upon which I am come; I am ignorant of the cause of this unhappy quarrel, and, in fulfilling the part which Lord Stanmore has imposed upon me, I would give a great deal to be the bearer of some explanation."

"I am much obliged," said D'Arcy, interrupting him; "but in this instance there can be no explanation. The aggression was made by Lord Stanmore. I, however, am the of-

fended party, to a greater extent than he conceives himself to be—so that it is impossible to settle this dispute but in one way. I have written to Charles Crofton, to ask him to be my second. I know he is in town, for I met him last evening; but there is so little time. Have you pistols, Sir Lewis?"

This question Sir Lewis answered in the affirmative.

"That will do—I told Crofton to procure them, and I fear it is that which is delaying him. Stay, I hear him now.—Crofton," said D'Arcy, advancing towards a handsome youth, who had entered the room, "that's a good fellow—I'll do as much for you another time."

"I see," said Sir Lewis, "I have only to take my leave. Mr. d'Arcy, you will find my principal on the ground as soon as yourself—at least, if he should not be exact, it will not be his fault."

"Oh, Stanmore will be there, Sir Lewis; I would have given him longer time, but I am under orders to leave England, and no excuse for my delay would be received at the Foreign-office, as I could not give the real one. Per-

haps you will be good enough to explain this to Lord Stanmore?"

"Certainly," and, bowing, Sir Lewis left the room.

"My dear D'Arcy," said Crofton, "what have you been quarrelling about?"

"I cannot very well tell you—but I think Stanmore is in the wrong. However, I cannot explain. I never was so sorry for any business in my life. Oh—but you do not mind being my second, Crofton?"

"Mind! I would do it for you every day in the week, if you asked me, D'Arcy; but you and Stanmore were such allies,—something could be done to prevent——"

"No, and for that very reason, when friends quarrel, you are quite sure the quarrel is an irreconcileable one. When I have fought with Stanmore, I may like him better than I do at this moment—but fight him I must. Good God! I have forgotten to order my cab—we shall be late—never mind, we may meet with a coach: that chance is better than waiting. Crofton, we must be off."

To avoid giving rise to suspicion, the two

friends went out of the house by means of D'Arcy's key, and with rapid steps pursued their way to ———.

The grey mist of a September morning was still perceptible in the atmosphere, and there is, even in the vicinity of London, a freshness and sweetness in the air, at that early hour, which is not in accordance with ugly undertakings of any sort; I think at early dawn it always seems as if the day were still too young to be giving birth to deeds of evil. However, these fastidious observations probably did not enter the minds of the four gentlemen who were assembled—some to shoot at each other, and the others to aid and abet them in so doing.

Lord Stanmore had been thinking of his sick mother, and of her doting affection for him. He had many near relations besides to whom he was attached, and though he had met with offences, he was more angry with the world than hating it. His conscience, too, told him that he had been precipitate in the wording, at least, of his letter to D'Arcy. Since he had heard of his intended departure for the Continent, he could not feel certain how far his former friend might be guilty, and whether

he was justifiable or not in wishing to take a last adieu of the Woodvilles. D'Arcy had been his greatest friend, and now he was on the point of a hostile meeting with him.

Lord Stanmore was impetuous and spoiled, though noble and generous at the same time: the more he feared he might be wrong, the more he desired to assure himself he was in the right; and when he beheld D'Arcy, he was obliged to redouble his inward re-assurances, for he feared lest his arm should shake when he held the weapon that might deprive his friend of existence. "I will not fire in the air," said Lord Stanmore to himself, "but I will purposely miss my aim."

The seconds measured the usual twelve paces, and placed their principals on the ground.

D'Arcy was thoughtful. "If I fall," said he, inwardly, "I should like this matter explained to Stanmore: he thinks I have broken my word."

"Are you ready, D'Arcy?" asked Crofton.

It had been arranged that they were to fire together, at a given signal, taking aim beforehand, or not, as they pleased.

Lord Stanmore raised his pistol carelessly, wishing to miss his antagonist. D'Arcy, on the contrary, deliberately pointed his weapon at the heart of his opponent.

It was an awful moment, for he was either barbarously or ostentatiously levelling his pistol with a murderous precision. The instant they stood thus proved sufficient to show their positions to Crofton, who was a very young man, and to induce him to break through all rules, and to obey the impulse of his heart, by rushing up to D'Arcy, and exclaiming, in an under tone—

"Stanmore is evidently not aiming at you, D'Arcy; are you bent on hitting him?"

"You will see," was D'Arcy's brief reply.

Crofton regained his ground, and the signal for firing was immediately given.

The time it took for Crofton to speak to D'Arcy was the affair of an instant, but it had disarranged Lord Stanmore's aim—his attention was diverted at a moment too critical, and when the rapidly-given signal was made, his hand proved unsteady, and, unaccountably as it seemed to him, he shot D'Arcy in the side.

D'Arcy was likely to prove more exact in

executing his intentions; Lord Stanmore was younger, more inexperienced, and swayed by softer feelings; D'Arcy was a practised shot; he had before fought a duel, and his mind was previously more resolved, his sentiments more harshly strung. So, when he fired in the air, much as it was at variance with his demonstrations one second previously, there was no reason to conclude that his design had been changed at the moment of its execution.

"My wound is not dangerous," were D'Arcy's first words to Crofton and Lord Stanmore.

A surgeon, who was in waiting at a convenient distance, was called for.

"This is horrible!" said Lord Stanmore, with much feeling; "and God is my witness I did not mean it: and you, D'Arcy—you fired in the air!"

"I meant to do so," answered D'Arcy; "however, you have not hurt me much. You moved your arm when Crofton spoke to me."

The surgeon approached, and examined the wound.

"It is not dangerous, that is, it may not be," said he.

"Thank God for it!" exclaimed Lord Stanmore, and a load was taken off his mind.

D'Arcy was too weak to move without assistance; he was supported to the surgeon's carriage, and conveyed to his lodgings, and thus for the present ended his departure for the continent.

"Your going up to D'Arcy after I had given the first signal was contrary to all rule," said Sir Lewis to Crofton, as they walked to their respective homes, after the proceedings we have described.

"I know it was," answered Crofton, "but what man could have forborne in such a case? I thought the devil must have been in D'Arcy, and if he had hit Stanmore he would have been very sorry afterwards. I really thought he was under some delusion."

"I believe he never intended otherwise than as he did," rejoined Sir Lewis.

"Then why choose to assume such a different appearance?"

"I don't know. D'Arcy is singular sometimes. I think he was very angry with Stanmore, and that he determined to exasperate him if he could. He saw directly that Stan-

more was not going to shoot him, and he would give him no encouragement to abstain."

"Well, he is an odd fellow—D'Arcy."

"So I think," returned Sir Lewis, as he and Crofton separated at the end of the street.

Violet feigned illness the day following the last eventful evening. Mrs. Hummings aided her in this deception, for that excellent woman felt considerable uneasiness lest the Woodvilles should discover her having so easily admitted Mr. d'Arcy, when they were not at home.

"I shall send to Mr. Camphor, I think," said Mrs. Woodville to her husband; "Violet seems quite ill."

"You had much better; but she wants change of air more than old Camphor. I must see and take you all to Ramsgate or to Broadstairs; Margate is more to my taste, but——"

"Oh, Margate is so very vulgar! Brighton is the only place to my fancy. I always think all other sea-side situations disagree with me; the air is too keen, and my lungs yet too delicate with being on the stage."

"Don't talk that nonsense to me, Lætitia," said Woodville, impatiently; "say outright at

once that Brighton is a gay place, and that therefore you like it better than Ramsgate or Broadstairs. I am sure I don't care—you may have it your own way—only Brighton is dearer. However, I hate screwing. So, to Brighton let us go. Poor Violet! it may amuse her too. I am often unhappy now, when I look at that child; she is not as she used to be. I wish to Heaven not a gentleman in London had ever set his foot in my house," continued Woodville with a sigh; and his wife hastened to change the conversation; she knew that it was taking a turn that often sufficed to sour her husband's temper for the whole day, and it was almost the only circumstance that could do that.

"I think Mr. Dupas will go also to Brighton, and we might take a house together, and be very comfortable. I like the West Cliff."

"Have you sent for Mr. Camphor?"

"Yes;—I am sending, that is."

"Do it, then, or I shall walk to Mr. Camphor's myself, it is the only way to get a thing done in this house; what a dawdle you are! The child is ill, and you just *talk of do'ng* a

thing;" and with a displeased manner Woodville quitted the room.

When Camphor arrived, he proved of more use than he was in the habit of being, for though he neither knew of, nor could relieve, the unhappiness that was weighing down his young patient, still he discovered that she was feverish and wanted rest, and he therefore gave her some effervescent draughts, combining an opiate, that would procure her a couple of hours repose. Her room was darkened, and Violet was left alone, by Mr. Camphor's orders; and under the influence of his medicine she fell asleep. In about two hours she awoke, refreshed, and with a little recovered energy,—enough, at least, to desire to get up, and to assure her parents she was better,—nay, quite well.

The Woodvilles were engaged this evening to drink tea with Mr. and Mrs. Augustus Octavian, of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden. Woodville desired his wife to go, while he remained at home,—Violet urged him not; and the kindly dispute was ended by Dupas, who came in to pay his usual visit, and declared that he should stay with Violet, and that, as

she was not well, one person's society would be better for her than that of two. Poor Woodville made many an inquiry about her health, and gazed upon his child with the most earnest looks of solicitude.

"You are feverish still, my poor little darling," said he, taking her hand.

"No, dear father," answered Violet, heavily; "no, I am much better;—go with my mother, and don't think of me,—I shall be so well to-morrow."

M. Dupas tried to amuse Violet; he talked to her, and offered to read out to her 'Adèle et Théodore.' This offer was accepted because it saved her the trouble of talking, which she felt quite unequal to. M. Dupas therefore emitted from his lungs, with patient unction, about half a dozen pages of Madame de Genlis' *tiède* French sentiment, when he was disturbed by a sigh. Such a sigh! a low and quivering sigh; the sigh that can convey such real evidence of wretchedness.

The old man heard it with a beating heart, for he was shocked with the conviction of the great unhappiness of one so dear to him. He turned round and beheld Violet Woodville

leaning with her arm upon the table. Her face rested on her hand, and was turned from him; but there was sadness in her very attitude, and she was so abstracted that she did not even take notice of the pause in his reading.

Dupas waited, in order to see whether she would not speak; but his silence occasioned no observation, and he was persuaded that his pupil was unconscious of it.

"Were you amused by my reading?" said he.

"Yes; you are tired, I fear," answered Violet, rousing herself, with an attempt to smile, and then her lips contracted again, and resumed their former expression.

It is well known that the muscles of the mouth have more to do with our feelings than any other feature of the face. The eye can look clear and bright while we are mentally suffering. The forehead may not show its marks of care, and with an effort all our features may seem composed, and with them we may deceive those who are not close observers; such, however, will discover in the lips, in the lines of the mouth, the involuntary evidence of the mind's action. And when, in the hour

of grief, we do smile, what a wretched smile it is, and how quickly the pale lips go quivering back to their true expression!

"No, I am not tired, but you, mon enfant, vous l'êtes. There is always consolation when we do that which is right," said M. Dupas, slowly,—for he was speaking, not to what Violet had said, but to that which her countenance was telling, while, with a penetrating eye, he watched its workings.

"There is, I hope," answered Violet.

"We have all our sorrows, or we have had them," continued M. Dupas; "and when they are irremediable, it becomes us to exert ourselves, and to remember, *que le bon Dieu* sends only the trials that we ought to withstand,—that he is the dispenser of all our griefs as well as of our joys, and so, when we are broken-hearted, *il y a toujours Dieu, et sur lui on peut se reposer: il nous aime quand le monde ne nous aime pas, et quand nous n'aimons pas le monde.*"

"It is hard to have so much to bear when we are young."

"But it is in the time of youth the lessons of God will make the most impression. They

are sent us then to form our characters, and to steady us for the years that are to come,—En tout, et pour tout, la Providence a raison."

"I will endeavour to think it is so," replied Violet, in a tone of the very deepest dejection; "only it would be better to die, and to be spared our sorrow."

"My child, that may seem true, but without knowing sorrow would you be fit to die? you would have given no proof of virtue."

A letter was brought into the room at this moment. It was addressed to "Miss Woodville," and in a hand-writing she did not know. She opened it with a presentiment of evil, which was not extraordinary, for her nerves were shaken, and were ready to give way to every possible impression of ill that could be devised; and women's nerves are wonderful diviners in that way sometimes.

She opened the letter. It was an envelope enclosing a small folded note, and a letter besides, sealed with D'Arcy's arms, also addressed to her, and in his hand. On seeing this Violet grew pale: she felt she could not conceal her emotion, and rose to leave the room. M. Dupas observed her without re-

mark: he felt his interference could hardly be of use; but, at the same time, there was a mystery hanging over this child of his adoption, which cruelly disturbed the old man.

In the meantime Violet was alone, and reading as follows:—"You will only receive this in the event of my being fatally wounded. I could not leave the world without saying a farewell to one whom, I fear, I may have injured. If you loved me, Violet, you have had your excuse; for no man ever tried more to win a woman's heart; and if in this I have proved your enemy, I have had my punishment, for I have loved in vain—*and I have loved.*

"What I have felt, you will never know; for you may be the victim of feeling, but not of passion.

"And now, Violet, forgive me, if, for your sake, I endeavour to destroy the illusion I have helped to create: it is the only reparation I have it now in my power to make you.

"Believe me, then, dearest, when I tell you to build no more upon the romance of life, and despise not its dull realities.

"Be certain it is better to esteem fully, than

to love fully. You are young: time is all before you, and it is your duty to exert yourself. Forget me, for my sake; there are better men than I am; and I could be contented, were I but assured that your future fate would be in the hands of one of honourable character. Remember this. May Heaven bless you, my beloved one!

"G. D'Arcy."

On first reading this letter, Violet was so shocked at the commencement, that she hardly entered into its full meaning: when at last she comprehended the force of the opening paragraph, she rent the air with a wild scream. It was heard, and the servants and M. Dupas hastened to her room.

She was sitting on the floor, with the most haggard expression of despair. The letter was in her hand. On beholding her old friend, Violet jumped up, and threw her arms round his neck.

"Save me! Save me!" she exclaimed.

"From what, my child?" said M. Dupas, terrified at her manner.

"Oh, save me!" she continued, in convulsive accents.

" But from what?—Speak; parlez—mon enfant."

Violet sank down, and threw herself at the feet of M. Dupas.

" He is not dead," she gasped. " Save me from it——It must be that I am deranged!" cried the poor girl, in broken accents, burying her brow in one hand. M. Dupas saw the letter she held in the other. He took it from her, and perused it; while he did so, he knelt down by the side of Violet, and held her hand; she gazed up in his face, with a terrible expression of anxiety.

" Mais il y avoit encore une lettre?" said M. Dupas. Violet made no answer; she did not understand him. The old man discovered on the ground the folded note he remembered to have seen her take out likewise.

" Ah, la voilà!" he exclaimed, and read it, while his countenance brightened.

" Eh bien," said the old man, with delight; " je vous l'ai bien dit, il ne faut pas se désespérer. Il vit, ma chère—calme toi."

When Violet heard these words she burst into tears, and M. Dupas wept likewise.

The note was from Howell, and couched in the following words :—

"MADAM,—The enclosed was given to me by Mr. d'Arcy, and forgotten to be sent in time with his other letters. My master was in such confusion of business, setting off, and particularly myself, that I have forgotten it sooner. I think, Ma'm, as you will have heard of Mr. d'Arcy fighting with my Lord, that I may be so bold as to make free to tell you, Mr. Brodie thinks master will do well, and is not in no danger. I hope it is not of consequence my forgetting the letter.

"Your humble obedient servant,

"J. HOWELL."

Violet's were tears of joy, and M. Dupas's were for joy too. He was too kind-hearted not to be relieved by ceasing to behold the distracting anguish of Violet Woodville.

The letter which he had read so opportunely, and which Violet had totally overlooked, was, as we have seen, from Howell, D'Arcy's servant.

As soon as the first excitement caused by his master's disaster was over, Howell, still fearful lest he should be blamed for previous

neglect, aware, as he conceived himself, of the importance D'Arcy attached to any letter to Miss Woodville, forwarded this one to her, without additional delay; and with the amiable desire of relieving her anxiety, in case the news of the duel had reached her, he enclosed the specimen of his caligraphy which has been presented to the reader.

CHAPTER IV.

"The maid that loves
Goes out to sea upon a shattered plank,
And puts her trust in miracles for safety."

Violet met with much kindness from her parents. They sympathised, in some degree, in her distress, and, being ignorant of D'Arcy's true conduct to their daughter, they were willing to be very glad when they heard that he was likely to recover,—especially as they were then aware that he was intending to proceed to the Continent.

M. Dupas alone guessed how deeply Violet's happiness was involved by D'Arcy. But he knew now of no remedy, and, with genuine good sense, he wished to spare her from family reproaches and advice, which are never so unpalatable as when they have become useless.

Day after day Violet solaced herself by reading her lover's parting letter, and, day after day, her affection sank deeper in her bosom.

His duel and his danger had endeared him to her. Her terror at the idea of his death had almost deprived her of reason, and she began to have a fear of the force of her own feelings. So strange and so inconsistent is the human heart, that, independently of her love for D'Arcy, she began to feel for herself at last, and a kind of nervous selfishness came over her. She dreaded the horror of her own mental sufferings, and often said to herself, in the event of a further separation, "I could not bear it!"

Then, and not till then, was Violet Woodville in danger of falling. It was now that she required a friend to support and to console her, to rouse her moral courage by assurances of that great truth,—that we are never called upon to endure more than we are equal to contend with, and that where there is weakness there is guilt. But Violet Woodville had no friend to do this, since her father

and mother were in comparative ignorance of her situation. M. Dupas, if he understood it better, could scarcely act, for, while she had received his advice, she had never made him her confidant; consequently, he knew not of her moral danger.

Violet wrote to D'Arcy,—the letter was wet with her tears. She besought him to assure her himself that his life was safe. Hummings took this letter, and brought her the answer, and from that day Violet indulged in a clandestine correspondence with her admirer.

As he got better, her spirits returned,—she looked happier than she had done for a long time,—D'Arcy's letters were the cure to her mind,—she gave way to the bliss of receiving them,—and on these letters Violet might be said to live. Poor Violet! it was so great a relief to her not to be so oppressed with such an Atlas-like load of despair.

She hoped again!—what she hoped she knew not; but she did hope, and if in hoping, she was sinning we must believe her guilty. How often in life should we not call on death to end our woes if it were not for the unde-

fined trust that gently leads us on, and softens all our sorrows! Man may bless his God when he solaces him with hope.

Violet was informed by D'Arcy of the origin of his quarrel with Lord Stanmore. This, likewise, riveted her chains. D'Arcy, then, had received his wound on her account, and tears filled the eyes of Violet whenever she remembered this fact.

Her father now proposed moving to Brighton, and the heart of his daughter bounded with joy, for, as soon as he was able, D'Arcy was to proceed thither for his health.

The Woodvilles took one of the small houses on the West Cliff, in one of the back streets leading up from the shore. Mrs. Woodville was excessively happy in being at Brighton, and Woodville was very well pleased likewise. They met with some of their London friends, and Mrs. Woodville liked frequenting the libraries of an evening, and hearing the bad singing, and putting her half-crowns into a lottery-box, and rejoicing over the sixpenny article she received, as the well earned recompense. Then she liked

shrimps for breakfast,—to be sure, in October they were scarce, but, *en revanche*, they had excellent whiting, and the potatoes were so good at the sea-side, Mrs. Woodville declared. The walks on the Esplanade, too, had a great charm for her. And then, the Octavians and Mr. Brown arrived one day, and took up their quarters at the large boarding-house over Wright's library. Besides these, it must be owned that their friends of another kind were scarce. There was, to be sure, the one London dandy, who is always to be seen about Brighton. There never is but one, *par parenthèse*,—two at the same time were phenomena not to be met with. The present dandy was not an acquaintance of the Woodvilles; but they heard of him as living at the Albion, and frequenting the club, and playing *écarté* with a rich and vulgar Mr. Canterbury, a retired wax-doll maker; and they saw him occasionally lounging about with one hand in his pocket, and blowing his nose, when it blew hard, with a cambric pocket-handkerchief.

The Woodvilles were one day walking on the grass terrace before the Brunswick houses,

when they were first met by Mr. Brown; and the greeting between him and the elder Woodvilles was very affectionate.

"Well, you could not have done a pleasanter thing than this, Mrs. Woodville," said Brown, injuring his boot heel by repeatedly knocking it with a thin and elegant stick of painted black wood, surmounted by a brass knob,—the whole intended to represent ebony set with gold.

"Why, I am fond of sea amusements," answered Mrs. Woodville; "and so much of London as we have——"

"Oh, yes; but such good taste in you not to go to Margate! Upon my word, the vulgarity of that place, Miss Woodville!—Let me advise you never to go there. No; I," said Mr. Brown, pompously, "*I* was going to the Continent—I like to go occasionally to Europeanise myself; but Spada wanted to come here.—You know Signor Spada?"

"What, the second tenor at the Opera?" asked Woodville.

"Yes; he is a creature of great genius."

"Why, Laporte did not think so."

"Oh!" answered Brown, with a gesture of

contempt, "Spada is a man of talent, and of the warmest feelings; but he abhors England, and if it had not been for me, would not have come to Brighton."

"Then, I think," answered Woodville, "you had better have gone to the Continent, Brown, as you intended, and Spada with you."

"Ah!" replied Mr. Brown, casting his eyes at Violet, "but I must own to having many little reasons, that were inducements, I may say laws, to prevent my going abroad."

"I shall be very happy to know Signor Spada," said Mrs. Woodville. "You can introduce him to us?"

"I certainly will. His only fault is, that he will copy me. I often say to him,—'My dear Spada, my style does not suit your Italian physiognomy.' But he is invulnerable; and will persist in dressing after me, and acquiring my—my—my style—ways, you know, peculiar to me. All people have their style, I believe, and it becomes ridiculous when another person endeavours to—but Spada is a very good fellow. Poor wretch! he is passionately in love with the most beautiful woman—a Countess. I forget her name—he did tell me—but who

lives at Florence. Her husband threatened to stab her, and Spada left Italy. She broke her heart, and is probably dead by this time."

"Time she was, if her heart was broken," said Woodville.

"Oh! of course, I mean figuratively speaking. Spada, however, does not seem to think she can be alive."

"I suppose you mean to stay some little time at Brighton?"

"Oh, Heavens!" said Brown, "yes, for ever, I would stay, could stay, if——." He sighed, but the sigh was not heard; for a puff of wind just then blew it the way it was not meant to go.

"Well, we make it out very pleasantly. We have been to the theatre once or twice. There's a pretty good company here now."

"Mr. Bobbs is coming too, I hear. I own I am surprised at his thinking of engaging himself at this place."

"He is quite right, if he can make money by it," observed Woodville.

"The Octavians told me," said Mrs. Woodville, "that the manager was not at all a *gentlemanly* man."

"Indeed!—Ah! I am glad you told me," replied Brown, thoughtfully; "for I had some idea of appearing for a night or two, but I will not think of it."

"Oh, it would not be worth your while: they have bad audiences."

"What, then, it is low altogether?"

"Oh, very, I think, for gentlemen like Bobbs and Signor Spada. Don't say I said so; Mr. Bobbs might not like it; he is so particular."

"Oh! dear me, no; but I will warn poor Spada, lest he should think of engaging. I am looking for him now, but I rather think he is taking a warm bath."

"I am glad of it," said Woodville, who disliked foreigners. "He looks as if he would be none the worse for it—no offence to your friend, Brown."

"Oh!" said Brown, "I know your joking ways, Mr. Woodville."

"Yes, but I am not joking," answered Woodville.

M. Dupas had taken the house at Brighton jointly with the Woodvilles, and consequently was now living with them.

"I wish," said Mrs. Woodville, one rainy day, when she was sitting in their small but pretty parlour, and had got the vapours, "I wish Violet would grow to be more like what she was, M. Dupas."

M. Dupas took out his snuff-box, and crossed his legs.

"Charles looks cross about her, as if I could help Mr. d'Arcy's duel," Mrs. Woodville resumed, after a pause.

"Oh! she was changed before Mr. d'Arcy's duel," replied Dupas.

"Well," said Mrs. Woodville, opening her eyes, "but it was not my fault."

"*C'est selon*," answered the old Frenchman, shrugging his shoulders.

"Why, I am sure *I* did nothing to make me answerable for her being in love, or anything else."

To this there was no assent from M. Dupas, so Mrs. Woodville gave one for herself.

"I did not, that's certain. I am sure it is a most disheartening thing to do anything for anybody's interest, even for one's own, for all the reward one gets is to be found fault with. I have no idea of Charles looking angry at me,

as he did just now, when Violet took up that nasty old newspaper, and burst into tears, because she fell upon the account of that tiresome duel. It was very silly of her; only I am not displeased with Violet, because she could not help it; but it is very hard if I am to be responsible for such things as that!"

To this sensible and argumentative speech of his friend's wife, M. Dupas appeared to listen with great attention; he did not reply categorically to her remarks, but he expressed his hopes that in time Violet would recover her former cheerfulness; showing plainly that he fully entered into the anxiety of her parents.

"But it is not necessary for me to assure you of that," said the old man; "I have the same affection for Violet as if she was my child. I have no children, and all *mes petites épargnes sont pour elle; ce n'est pas un secret, je crois.*"

"I am sure, M. Dupas, you are a very kind friend to us, and we feel very grateful if you have any such kind intentions as those you speak of. As for me, I am sure I always meant all for the best; I had a natural ambition for Violet, and perhaps I was not so prudent as I might have been, but it is just luck. Violet

might have married Lord Stanmore, I am persuaded; and then I should have been all that is perfect, and Charles would not have given me those sour looks that I get from him now. Oh, here is Mr. Brown. Well, how do you do to-day, Mr. Brown?"

"Very well, I thank you. *Bon jour*, Mons. Dupas. Shall you go to the library this evening, Mrs. Woodville?"

"Yes, I intend it. Perhaps you will drink tea with us first?"

"I shall be most delighted. May I bring Spada?"

"Oh, certainly."

"Poor Spada lost a great deal of money last night. That's his only failing, poor fellow! he cannot keep from the gaming-table. He was coming this morning to pay his respects to you, but he is gone to Mohamed's to be shampooed, so he will come afterwards. Have you or Miss Woodville been shampooed?"

"No; is it very pleasant?"

"It's the most exhilarating thing in the world; and really it is not expensive, as Spada says, for it is only half-a-guinea a time; and

there is so much attendance required, and showers of perfumed waters—it is a luxury quite oriental, as Spada says. Spada never will go except when he can be attended by Mohamed himself. I think, M. Dupas, if you would allow me to advise, that a course of shampooing would be of benefit to you."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Brown; but for why?"

"It imparts a lissomness to the limbs, and gives a renewal of youth, which is the most charming thing imaginable."

"*Ah! je m'en doute cependant.*"

"Oh, my dear Sir, ask Spada. Spada declared to me, that when he came here he was dying. The atmosphere of this country has so hurt his lungs, joined to distress of mind of a most touching nature, that his whole system was deranged, and now he is perfectly well!"

"*Corps et ame?*"

"Oh, there are some things that a man of feeling like Spada can never recover; but except that, I never in my life saw a man so altered for the better."

"*J'en suis bien aise, et quand je suis malade*

de corps et d'ame, j'irai pour être shampooed chez votre Turc, votre Monsieur Mahomed," replied the old Frenchman, drily.

The Woodvilles were out walking one morning on the esplanade, about ten days after their arrival at Brighton: a young man was standing on the beach below the terrace, and near the water's edge. He leaned upon a stick, and bent over the waves, as they came washing the shingles at his feet. His figure was slight and graceful, but thin, and he showed traces of sickness; his air was remarkable, and his bearing, though feeble, distinguished; his features were pale and attenuated, but finely cut; and the singular expression of his eyes was visible even while watching the rushing sea foam. But, on the whole, there was a dark cast over the brow, that seemed as if it should have been more open, and in the corner of the handsomest mouth there lurked something cold and contemptuous.

D'Arcy—for the reader will have recognized the portrait, we think—D'Arcy involuntarily turned round, and began slowly to ascend the beach, at the very moment when the Woodvilles passed on the terrace. Violet saw him;

her parents did not. D'Arcy likewise beheld her, and when he did, how brightly flashed the spirit of joy on his pale countenance! Oh! it is beautiful, in man or in woman, when the soul speaks in the countenance, and the fire of the immortal spirit is called forth to light up our grosser nature, in testimony of one overwhelming sentiment. If Heaven's light shines on earth, surely it is when thus beaming in the human countenance.

And D'Arcy, too, could he have seen Violet when she first drew in the assurance that she beheld him, might have cried out with the poet—

"How beautiful the love-light of her eyes!"

D'Arcy made no attempt to approach the Woodvilles on this occasion. Some days afterwards he called upon them, and endeavoured as much as he could to render his manner such that Mr. Woodville would be forced to submit with a good grace to his visit.

Mrs. Hummings was now completely gained over, and through her D'Arcy wrote constantly to Violet.

Each day of her life was now adding to her

weakness. Her parting from her lover, his duel, and the alarm for his life, had overwrought her feelings, and they were yielding, because they did not possess the same unimpaired strength as formerly. All the better principles which stood in the way of D'Arcy's triumph were being sapped one by one.

In prosperity we often sin; but if we do so in unhappiness, the pity of our fellow-creatures should be more freely given. We know so little of the wiles and workings of our deceitful nature, and we are so unconscious when our hour of weakness is at hand, and we are proud of our strength whilst on the brink of falling. It is prettily said by Kotzebue—"Mit dem unglücklichen solte der glücklichen nicht rechten." Bear this in mind, my reader, and believe it is sometimes better to be merciful than just. Censure, then, but do not judge too hardly of the erring days of the poor young Opera-dancer; and rather give way to grief than to indignation at her bending virtue. Let it also be borne in mind that she had only imbibed an imperfectly taught religion, and an untaught morality. Her actions were not

swayed by firmly-settled principles. Her impulses were not under the correction of a good education; and when this corrective is wanting, the chances are that, one day or other, we fall.

Her home had lost all its charm, and, in alternate hours of doubt and sorrow, she passed her time. Occasionally she shuddered, on reflecting upon the system of concealment she was carrying on towards her parents: virtue prevailed sometimes; but D'Arcy had only to write of parting from her, and of his love, and she was won again to him.

There was a time when Violet Woodville would have disbelieved the possibility of her present conduct. D'Arcy now continually urged her to elope with him: he was getting well; and, as soon as he could, he was to go to his post abroad, to relieve the person who had been temporarily appointed during his absence.

D'Arcy was too much a man of the world not to foresee that it would be better that the scandal of Violet's abandoning her home should take place some time before he left England,

lest a hue and cry should be raised against him, in his official capacity, for the abduction of a young lady of respectable parents.

On one occasion only could the lover obtain an interview with Violet. It was on a day when the Woodvilles went over to Worthing, and their daughter made some excuse not to accompany them. She then went out to meet D'Arcy, in those fields which lie at the back of Brunswick-terrace, on the West Cliff.

D'Arcy did not fail to turn this opportunity to advantage. He had a way with him, in talking to Violet, which would have misled a person of more penetration, and one less prejudiced in his favour than was poor Violet. He showed a delicacy of language and manner towards her, which, in spite of her better judgment, blinded her to the truth. He talked eloquently of virtue, while he reasoned her into vice; and the purity of his words imparted so shining a varnish to his arguments, that their intrinsic baseness was obscured.

> "They little guess, who at our acts are grieved,
> The perfect joy of being well deceived."
>
> LORD ROCHESTER.

"After all, if you are doing wrong, it is

yourself you sacrifice," said D'Arcy: "I am persuaded that you have more merit in conceding to my wishes, than if you had abandoned me, and remained in your home. There are various sorts of selfishness: in surrendering all to me, you will have given the best proof that you are not egotistical: we shall be so happy, too, Violet. When I allow myself to dwell upon that possibly happy future, I feel such a joy within me, that, if you knew it, you could not have the heart to overturn such a dream of bliss. Dearest! you would reproach yourself—I know you would—if you were to desert me now!"

Violet Woodville wept, and listened to these and similarly false arguments. She only felt that she could no longer struggle against the agonising fear of losing D'Arcy for ever. She condemned herself; she thought of her parents, and she remembered her God—but the tempter was by, and he would not quit her till he had extracted from her a fatal and reluctant promise.

"And now," said D'Arcy, in a low voice, when they parted, "I know that I may trust you, Violet; but should you fail me, I will end

my life. Listen!—I swear it before Heaven! —and I give you my word, that I live or not, according as you keep your promise. Remember! I could not, if I wished, break my word: my life is in your hands, Violet!"

That night Violet Woodville passed almost in a state of distraction. She was seized with the bitterest remorse for the promise she had given; she despised herself—sleep fled her eyes, and the tears of sorrow were denied her. Full of repentance she wrote to D'Arcy, and told him she could not keep her promise.

"I will not—I should live to hate myself; I do, as it is. If you have ever loved, give me back that bad promise; I must have been sunk in iniquity when I gave it, and even you must one day despise me for it. I implore you to forget it, and tell me I am free: I insist upon this, for I must not go on thinking myself so worthless."

D'Arcy's answer was short:—"You are free; but my word I shall keep—I cannot live without you!—But is it come to this?—and will you even let me die?——You may relent, and I will watch before your house: if, at six

this evening, I do not see you at the middle window, my fate is decided."

Who doubts that Violet Woodville was to be seen that evening at the middle window? She believed he would kill himself. To say he would, was the commonest stratagem that D'Arcy could have had recourse to, and, unless he was sincere, one of the most paltry. Judging from what was known of his character, however, at that time, he was likely to have been in earnest in his declaration of suicidal intentions; he had little religious feeling, and not having any strong ties of affection, his disposition was of a description to make him capable of ending his life when he conceived that his desires were irremediably thwarted.

CHAPTER V.

" Never let men be bold enough to say,
Thus, and no farther, shall my passions stray;
The first crime past, compels us on to more,
And guilt proves fate, that was but choice before."

" The woman who deliberates is lost."

Those little inland streets at Brighton are very comfortable places. You have not the roaring of the sea in your ears all day, or the eternal glare of its wide expanse in your eyes. The Woodvilles had, as has been said, taken a particularly pretty little house in one of these inlets on the West Cliff, and they, and M. Dupas, were much pleased with its snugness. Whenever they did not amuse themselves elsewhere, they used to have parties,—Mr. Brown, and Spada, and the Octavians, to drink tea; and Woodville had met with an old friend, who was a celebrated performer on the French-horn. They would have been the happiest people in the world if Woodville

could have watched less anxiously over his child. Her want of spirits, and her worn expression, often occasioned him indescribable anguish.

Woodville was a man of the warmest feelings, and possessed the most generous and affectionate heart. The thing he prized most tenderly was his daughter; and now he often reproached himself as being the first cause of that daughter's dejection. He thought he ought not to have allowed her to go upon the stage, and that he was also guilty of great weakness in permitting his wife to make their house the frequent resort of men whose grade in society was superior to their own.

Woodville, however, at this time, imagined his daughter was safe from any bad designs of D'Arcy's, but he feared, and with reason, that her affections were given irrevocably; and he could not avoid thinking that Brown, and such as Brown, were not likely to remove a D'Arcy from her thoughts; and, altogether, he dreaded that it might be long before he should see his child as he was wont to do,—the blythe bird that once made his home a little paradise to him.

One evening, in the commencement of November, the house of the Woodvilles was gay with mirth and music. They had asked some of their theatrical friends to pass the evening, and Mr. Brown, who had a fine voice, was singing the 'Captive Knight' and the 'Parisienne,' and executing them with great effect.

"I must say," said Mr. Brown, "it is too provoking that Spada is not able to come here this evening."

"What's the matter with him, then, Mr. Brown?" demanded Mrs. Octavian, sharply.

"Have you not heard?" exclaimed Brown, with much surprise. "He went out hunting with the Brighton harriers, and was thrown. He is severely hurt. I advised him not to go; for I said to him,—'My dear Spada, if I were you I would not go.'"

"Good gracious! you don't mean to say he put on a red coat?"

"And pray why should not Spada put on a red coat, Mrs. Octavian?"

"Oh, dear, I wish I had seen him."

"Umph! I don't know why; do you, Mrs. Woodville?"

"Not I, Mr. Brown."

"Well, Mrs. Octavian," said Woodville, "if you have set your mind upon seeing him, we will go out and watch for the Signor some afternoon, when he will be coming home from the hunt."

"Why, I am sorry to say," observed Brown, "Signor Spada thinks he cannot stay away from Milan much longer. He had letters the other day, which he showed to me,—of course I cannot repeat their contents; but he conceives he is called upon to make the sacrifice of his own convenience, and, for the sake of another's peace of mind, to return to Italy."

"What," demanded Mrs. Octavian, "cannot he get an engagement with Laporte for the next season, poor man?"

"Dear Mrs. Octavian, don't ask such questions," said Mr. Octavian to his spouse, "people don't like to have their private affairs inquired into in that way."

"But the man himself is not here; I am not asking *him*, Mr. O."

"Spada has a genius peculiarly his own," continued Brown, "and must be appreciated

whenever he is understood. Miss Woodville, may I ask were you not much pleased with Spada?"

"Where are you, Violet?" exclaimed Mrs. Woodville, surprised at not beholding her daughter in the midst of their little circle.

"I am here, mother," answered the faint voice of Violet.

The company turned round to look, and they beheld Miss Woodville sitting in a distant part of the room. She was leaning back in her chair, and her hands were clasped before her. She was very pale, her eyes looked red, and their brightness was gone; she did not move on becoming the object of observation, and seemed almost unconscious of it.

"Why, you look very cold, my dear," said Woodville, going up to her, "and your hand is like ice."

"Is it, father? I *am* very cold," Violet replied; and her teeth chattered.

"Come to the fire, then."

She obeyed, but the fire did not seem to warm her.

"Violet, are you ill?" asked her mother.

"No."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps you had rather not hear our talking?" said Mrs. Octavian, "and we will go."

"My wife does talk so screamingly," observed Mr. O.

"My singing has disturbed you," said Brown.

"Violet, love, what *is* the matter with you?" again asked the blunt but affectionate father.

"Nothing, father—nothing."

"Then it is very odd, for I never saw you look so ill!"

"No, indeed I am well, but I will sit here by the fire—it is very cold."

"Oh, then it is evident she has got a cold," cried Mrs. Octavian, "or she would never call this a cold night. Why, it is quite spring weather—so mild, so muggy all day: was it not, Mr. Brown?"

"Indeed I thought so. I went this morning, about twelve, to get a Dante at Wright's for Signor Spada, and the sun was quite oppressive."

"So it was. Well, if you don't object then, Mrs. Woodville, suppose we encore the 'Cap-

tive Knight,' and 'The treasures of the deep,' Mr. Brown."

The gentleman did as he was requested, and Violet remained by the fire. No wonder her father had said he never had seen her look so ill. She seemed grown suddenly thin, her features looked pinched, and her lips were very pale; whilst round her large eyes there was a deep black hollow line; her hair hung out of curl down her cheeks, and her figure, instead of its usual uprightness, was bent and drooping. The very sound of her voice was low and altered, and in the little she did say, the last word of each sentence almost seemed as if too great an effort for utterance—the sounds sank below her breath, and from time to time she shivered.

"Are you better now, Violet?" M. Dupas presently inquired, with his usual kindness.

"Yes, I am," she replied. "Don't let my father get vexed about me, I am not ill."

"*Non, ma chérie. Cependant, un peu d'eau de fleurs d'orange? En voici sur la table.* I will pour a little into a wine glass of my *eau sucré*."

Violet accepted the remedy, but her hand

trembled while she held the glass. Afterwards she was, or pretended to be, better; probably her nerves were a little restored by the fleur d'orange.

The party broke up, and then, when their friends were dispersed, the Woodvilles again enjoined Violet to tell them if she was unwell; she still denied being ill, but only repeated that she had felt chilled, and that M. Dupas's remedy had done her good.

"Then you think you will sleep?" said her father.

Violet stared wildly, her lips quivered, she turned her face quickly away, and her emotion passed unnoticed.

Violet Woodville left the room; she presently returned. Her father was then standing near the piano, helping her mother to shut it; Violet said nothing, but knelt down at his feet, and stooped her head towards the ground.

"What is it, Violet?"

"I am looking for my needle-case; I have found it, I think."

On pretence of seeking the needle-case, Violet bent her head lower still. Her father retained his position, there being some diffi-

culty in closing the piano. Violet bent down till she could reach his feet, and she then kissed them; that gentle kiss of his child was not felt by Woodville, because it was not guessed at by him; he felt only that Violet touched him, and he moved, saying "I am in your way, I fear."

She answered in the negative, and rose, pretending to have found what she sought, and once more left the room.

On that night Violet Woodville quitted her home. About one in the morning, when its inmates were wrapt in sleep, she moved down stairs; and Hummings, her treacherous ally, opened the door of the lodging-house, and accompanied her. Violet was clad in her cloak, and drawing it closely round her, was hurried along by Mrs. Hummings.

She was presently stopped, and beheld D'Arcy.—"We have a fine night, dearest," he whispered. "Give me your arm; the boat is ready."

"D'Arcy!" said Violet, in a low thick voice, "let me go back?"

"Impossible!"

"D'Arcy, I entreat you to let me go back,"

she repeated; but in a more faint and a more earnest tone.

"Are you mad, Violet? What, now?—not for worlds!" And, seeing her irresolute, D'Arcy hurried her on, till they reached the end of one of the streets leading down to the cliff. They went down the stone steps to the beach, about half-way up the esplanade; a light sailing vessel was standing off and on near the shore, and the moon's light shone brilliantly on its white sails. A boat was hauled upon the shingle, and several sailors were standing close to it, evidently on the watch. At a signal from D'Arcy, the boat was presently launched, and, placing his two companions in it, he jumped in himself. They were soon alongside the small schooner, transhipped into it, and, the boat being hauled up to her quarter, the vessel got under weigh for Dieppe.

D'Arcy remained with his unfortunate companion three weeks at Dieppe. He then returned with her to England, and proceeded to London, where he placed her in lodgings in a respectable part of the town. He took the utmost care of her external comfort, and

solaced her with every attention he could bestow.

It was not his intention to keep her in concealment. On the contrary, he was rather anxious than otherwise that her friends should discover and see her, if they desired it, before he took her abroad.

At one time he wished her to write to her parents, but the bare idea of such an act, in her fallen situation, Violet Woodville looked upon as impossible. D'Arcy had a good many things to occupy him, but there is no saying how many he did not neglect at this time for the sake of not quitting his poor victim. He was going to his post in Italy, and intended to make Violet precede him to Dover, for the sake of appearances. He felt that he might not venture to take her with him in his own carriage, lest such a proceeding should draw down animadversion in his then position.

When Mr. Woodville discovered the loss of his child, and felt the assurance of her disgrace, his anger at first rose above his grief. He could obtain no clue to her place of retreat, and only went with his family instantly to London, as her probable destination. He

spent three days in fruitless search; and then, imagining she was gone abroad, he flew to the Foreign Office, to inquire if Mr. d'Arcy was in England. With much difficulty he procured an interview with one of the clerks; he could only learn that Mr. d'Arcy was certainly still in England. The wretched father had already inquired at D'Arcy's usual residence for some information respecting him, but there, likewise, he learnt nothing. He then wrote to one or two gentlemen whom he knew, and who were D'Arcy's acquaintances. From them he ascertained that D'Arcy had not been lately seen in town, possibly he was at Melton. Woodville thought so too, and to Melton he went, and when in that quarter, as may be surmised, his researches were equally fruitless. He returned to his home,—to his weeping, wailing, miserable, weak-minded wife, and to his desolate fire-side:—such was now the home of poor Woodville—the home that D'Arcy had made for him!

Woodville had always said little expressive of his grief, and he seldom, even for days together, made a remark upon Violet; and as for D'Arcy,—of him how could he speak? But

his face was careworn, and, though sometimes flushed with sudden anger, oftener pale with concentrated sorrow. He neither went to visit, or admitted any one. His wife felt an awe of him, and even M. Dupas—the sole exception to his rule of exclusion—dared offer no consolation.

Perhaps it was almost more touching to behold the silent wretchedness of this benevolent old man: he was unprepared for the blow, having never calculated upon Violet's elopement. *He* was not, however, angry,—he pitied her most deeply, and not the less because she was erring,—either his nature was a gentler one than most other people's, or the world, such as he had found it, had made it so. He, too, was seeking for the lost girl, and as fruitlessly as her father, but he did not give up the point, and would say, "Attendons, le pauvre enfant nous donnera de ses nouvelles."

One day when Woodville was out, wandering he knew not whither, he caught (as he thought) a distant glimpse of D'Arcy; nor were the bereaved parent's eyes mistaken: D'Arcy had then been in town four days. Woodville was full a hundred yards from him

at the moment he first saw him turn down Portland Place. He hastened his pace to keep him in sight, but not to run after him; for, said Woodville to himself, if I get up with him, I shall knock him down, perhaps I shall murder him, and, out of spite, he may not tell me where *she* is, and that is what I want *first* to ascertain. It was about five on a December afternoon, and getting darker each minute, and D'Arcy was hurrying home to Violet Woodville on foot, which was somewhat unusual with him, but so it happened on this occasion.

He reached his house, and, entering, flew to Violet's room. She was sitting bent over the fire, pale, and the tears still in her eyes, as they ever were when she was alone, but they seemed to disappear when she saw D'Arcy, and a smile of joy glittered over her countenance.

"Dearest," exclaimed D'Arcy, with gaiety, and rushing to her, "I think I am never from you but that I learn to love you—no,—not better, that I could not,—but more and more to learn how unhappy I am without you!"

"Oh!" said Violet, "I am so glad to hear

you say so; for I am always dreading lest you, too, should grow to despise me, as others must do."

"Why do you wrong me with such a thought? In all that can concern either, should I not much sooner hate myself than you? Let me kiss away those naughty tears, and let me whisper to the eyes that weep them, that, for Violet's sake, and D'Arcy's too, who loves her so with all his heart, those tears must not fall;" and, as he sat at her feet, D'Arcy's hand bent her head towards his lips, and he mingled his kisses with the long, smooth, curling tresses of poor Violet's hair. The lovers were disturbed by a hasty footstep on the stairs.

"My God!" exclaimed Violet, with shaken nerves and instinctive terror.

"Be calm, love," said D'Arcy, starting up as the door of their room flew open, and Woodville stood before him!

The servant attempted an explanation of this abrupt intrusion, but D'Arcy made him a sign to absent himself. There was a bright flame from the fire (although there was no

lamp in the room), which was sufficient to render each person clearly distinguishable to the others. Woodville, for some seconds, remained standing in the middle of the apartment. He stared upon his child, who, on his entrance, had sunk upon the floor in an attitude between shame and terror. Her hands were clasped upon her knees, and her face was very pale; she ventured not to raise her half closed eyes to her parent's face, who, she felt, had fixed his gaze upon her.

Woodville suddenly burst into tears.

"My child!" he exclaimed, in a voice of the deepest emotion.

"I am here, father," said Violet, inarticulately, and cowering lower and lower; "I feared that you never would speak to me again."

Woodville advanced towards her, and, raising her from the ground, embraced her with burning tears.

"How you are altered," he suddenly exclaimed, and he looked upon her countenance, as if horror-struck. Violet was indeed altered: her face had grown very thin, her large eyes

were sunken, her brilliant complexion had totally vanished, and in her dress and person there was an air of negligence.

Woodville, hitherto, had seemed solely occupied with Violet; but when he made this observation upon her changed appearance, it seemed to recall him to a recollection of D'Arcy's presence; for, quitting his child, he advanced to him fiercely, and striking his clenched hand on the table before him, he exclaimed in a voice of fury—

"And you have done it.—Villain! do you know, I could take your heart's blood for this bad work of yours. Unfeeling man! my child —my only one,—that beautiful innocent!—my poor little Violet."

Woodville's voice faltered at the mention of his daughter.

"Was there nothing but my child to content you?—to ruin her, to make us all miserable?"

Woodville paused,—he was totally overcome.

D'Arcy, since his entrance, had remained leaning against the fire-place; but, at this moment, if the flickering fire light had crossed his face, the moisture would have been seen

gathering beneath, but not passing, his darkly fringed eyelids.

"I cannot contend with your sense of injury, Mr. Woodville," he observed, in a low voice, "and, were I to ask your forgiveness, you could not grant it me."

"Wretch! — you can now talk to me as coolly as when you cajoled my wife, and made her the witless pander to her child's seduction. Man! I tell you again, I would murder you,— could I by that means restore my lost girl's purity."

Violet rose up, and throwing herself before D'Arcy, with outstretched arms, she cried, "Father, if you would not have me die, do not say such words as those!"

"Unfortunate creature! do you not feel conscious for what a thing you are pleading?"

"He has been kind to me,—at least, he loves me," murmured Violet Woodville's angel voice.

"Violet," said D'Arcy, "leave us, my beloved: it is better that you should."

And so saying, he led her into an adjoining apartment, and returned instantly to her incensed and heart-broken father.

"Mr. Woodville," said D'Arcy, "I make the utmost allowance for your angry—your justly angry feelings; but permit me to speak,—you shall interrupt me in an instant,—but will you consider that the evil which is done to you, though effected by me, would, and might have been done you by any other man, who was preferred by your daughter? This is no extenuation of my error, but there were temptations; greater precautions should have been taken,—why were such facilities permitted to me, or to any one? and was it reasonable to expect that the feelings of your child should prove invulnerable, when so little check was put upon them?"

"Ay—ay, there you are right," said Woodville, bitterly: "God forgive me for my folly, and her mother too!"—He hesitated, and as if lost for a moment in a train of unhappy reflections, but he resumed; "Say what you will, you basely took advantage of the hospitality of my house, such as my house was; you have injured thereby a whole family,—your fellow-creatures,—beyond reparation. Do you think an hour's happiness will ever be mine, or my wife's again? and if you *can* feel com-

punction, do you not experience it, when you look on the poor, faded, miserable being, to which you have reduced my once bright, beautiful child? Had you robbed me, and devoted me and mine, by some rascality, to penury for our lives, I might have pardoned you,—had you tried to take my life, still I might have forgiven you,—would you even have murdered my child—as a Christian, I think, on the day of your death warrant, I might have forgiven you; but as her seducer," exclaimed Woodville, "no! I could not forgive you; not even if I could behold you dying at my feet, and imploring mercy!"

D'Arcy appeared to preserve his self-possession during this stern address from the injured parent; but at his last words he looked at him, and was struck with the wild and ferocious expression of Woodville's countenance: it was almost that of a maniac, and the unnatural glare of his eyes contrasted strangely with the haggard paleness of his features, streaked with one bright spot of red—the hectic flush of a frame which had been so long agitated and overwrought. His figure, too, looked strange and attenuated; he had grown so

much thinner, that his clothes hung upon, rather than fitted, his person. It might have been the dying fire-light which threw its unsteady glare upon his menacing attitude, and rendered the picture more sombre to D'Arcy's eyes. This idea seemed to occur to him, for he stirred up the embers, and lighted a lamp which stood on the table. Could a few weeks have wrought this change? he inwardly asked himself.

"Mr. Woodville," D'Arcy resumed, "I am submitting with all the patience I possess to your abuse, for I know I merit it fully, in your estimation. How much longer I may do so in my own house, is another thing; but some finale there must be to this discussion. Endeavour, if it be possible, to speak more calmly, or, if not, leave me now, and come again: or write and tell me what you in future desire, or expect from me."

"Give her to me again,—give me back my child! such as she is," cried Woodville, "and then I will pray that Heaven may rain its curses on you! But give her to me first, lest your misfortunes should in any way affect her!"

Woodville paused, as if unconscious what he was going to say; he sighed, and looked wildly round the room: his manner grew unnaturally calm,—he appeared half forgetful, and breathed hard, like one exhausted.

"It is useless and cruel to require your daughter to return to you now, Mr. Woodville; she herself, having once been under my protection, must desire to remain with me," said D'Arcy, mildly. "You must yourself feel that to ask her to quit me now, would be to condemn her to a life of wretchedness. The past cannot be repaired—why seek, therefore, to make your child unnecessarily wretched? You had better at present leave me. I give you my word as a gentleman, that when you next inquire for me, or for your daughter, you shall not be denied."

"I am ill," said Woodville, with a hoarse voice, "and my strength fails me—otherwise—but I will return again, and shortly too. As for you, Mr. d'Arcy, the worst wishes of a dying man—if I am one—follow you!—may the vengeance of Heaven overtake you!"

Woodville, half absently, quitted D'Arcy's presence with these words.

D'Arcy instantly ordered a servant to follow him, and, if he desired it, to call a coach.

Apparently unconscious, the unhappy man got into one, and was driven home.

He found his wife, and M. Dupas sitting with her. At once, and differently from his usual reserve, he began vehemently speaking of the occurrences of the last few hours. But while he was talking he was interrupted by a choking sensation, and began to spit blood violently. Mrs. Woodville went into hysterics, while M. Dupas sent for the nearest surgeon.

In the meantime, if Violet Woodville was suffering keen remorse, she had an eloquent consoler. Her impulse was to write to her father, to implore his forgiveness in the most humble manner, and, if both her parents permitted her, to return to their protection. This intention D'Arcy combated with vigour, and he further gave orders to his servants, that no letters should be sent from Miss Woodville without first passing though his hands. One was accordingly brought to him addressed to Woodville. D'Arcy, without breaking the seal, put the letter into the fire; and, in so doing, his motives, perhaps, were not bad; for

he argued,—what a life of weary penitence and regret would be consumed by Violet's returning home, and fulfilling the destiny she was proposing to herself!

He felt it rather to be his duty to rescue her from this miserable fate, and by every means in his power to endeavour to reconcile her to the sacrifices he had induced her to make. In the meanwhile he was surprised at seeing no more of Woodville; and when Violet, miserable at hearing nothing, obtaining no answer to the letter she imagined she had sent, lamented over it with despairing accents, D'Arcy consoled her as well as he could; but he himself could not divine the cause for the apparent abandonment of her family.

In the depth of his heart he could not help surmising, from the wretched state in which he beheld Woodville, that illness was the true cause of his non-appearance. But that he should have sent none of his family, or M. Dupas, argued that he must be very, very ill indeed. D'Arcy shuddered. Hitherto he had not chosen to see his seduction of Violet in any light beyond the injury done to her. But could he deny having seen the extreme affec-

tion these poor Woodvilles had evinced for their child?—and in earlier days had not the delicate and touching tenderness of the father towards his daughter been displayed in a way that had gone home to his heart? That the Woodvilles had been imprudent in their conduct, and that Violet's mother was weak and worldly, was true; but even with her it arose from a foolish anxiety for her child's aggrandisement, and D'Arcy was forced to acquit her of harbouring for a moment the suspicion, much less the desire, that her daughter might be seduced even under the most splendid auspices. And Woodville, had he not shown repeatedly his determination to get quit of the visiters who came to his house, and whose presence might prove dangerous?

Woodville's faltering words, "My child!—my only one!—my little Violet!" rang long and sometimes horribly in D'Arcy's ears; and he could not turn within and say to himself, as he had to Woodville, "I have done that which another might have effected;" for he felt a profound conviction that none but himself would, or in all probability could, have ever

effected the ruin of the pure-minded Violet Woodville.

D'Arcy was not a man to submit to more annoyance than necessity forced upon him. Finding Woodville did not appear again, after some further days had elapsed, he made speedy preparations for his own and his intended companion's departure for Italy.

They proceeded separately to Dover, and D'Arcy saw her embarked for Calais under the escort of one of his friends, and with a respectable foreign maid-servant.

Mrs. Hummings, by the bye, D'Arcy thought proper to dismiss, with a becoming gratuity for her past service.

The change of scene was of use to Violet Woodville, but she never felt happy. D'Arcy treated her with the utmost indulgence; in short, he proved all that a man can be to a woman with whom he is passionately in love. But Violet, assailed by constant remorse and by shame, soon became disenchanted. She began to understand the nature of D'Arcy's love, and the illusion that his eloquence and her own purity had assisted to create—vanished.

D'Arcy was a sensualist, like most men, and when that conviction once forced itself upon her, she became doubly alive to the nature of her conduct. The truth was, that Violet found herself in a situation which could not fail to be revolting to her native disposition. However, D'Arcy did not, at first, discover this turn which her feelings had taken.

It must not, in the meantime, be supposed that the severity of her compunction and her grief were not apparently lessened. Violet possessed too much tact to display a sorrow which must act as a reproach to D'Arcy.

For his sake, therefore, she entered into his plans for her amusement. She was touched by his solicitude, and the peculiar tenderness of her nature rendered her alive to all the charm of being loved.

No intelligence was received respecting her family.

D'Arcy secretly continued to wonder that neither her mother nor M. Dupas should write, if Woodville could not, or would not.

Violet always imagined that they were too deeply incensed to intend ever taking further notice of her. When she was alone, if any

thing, by chance, recalled England, or her home, the tears would roll down her cheeks in heavy drops, and sighs would burst from her bosom. "Oh, my poor father—if he would but forgive me!" she would inwardly exclaim; and her heart would yearn to behold again the fond parent she best loved.

Still she trusted to their both being well, and looked forward to returning to England, and then hearing of, if not seeing them.

This return was delayed much longer than D'Arcy desired, or than she expected; and Violet Woodville was able to number by years her absence from her own country.

CHAPTER VI.

"We take no note of time,
But from its loss—to give it then a tongue
Is wise in man."

My readers must suppose a few years to have elapsed since the events we last recorded; and allow me to open a new scene, by introducing them to a ball at Almack's, at a time when Almack's was thought much more of than it is in these days;—only then, as now, were to be seen the same description of persons collected for the purposes of business or amusement.

There were the chaperoning mammas, with anxious hearts and watchful eyes; and the *ennuyé* seeking to forget himself. There, too, was the weak woman hovering on the verge of crime; there the bolder sinner, hardened in the commission of evil,—the insignificant dandy—and the boys who aped him.

One of the lady patronesses was looking attentively through her glass at some object which the movement of the dancers occasionally hid from her view. Lady Colemore at length beckoned her son, a handsome youth of seventeen, and asked him if he knew the lady whom she described, as being one whose dress and appearance were remarkable.

"Ask some one, my dear Augustus, if you are ignorant."

Augustus promised, but he did not keep his word; and Lady Colemore looked round for a better informant.

The lady who attracted her attention was advancing up the room, leaning upon the arm of a political character of some celebrity, and who appeared much engrossed with his charge.

She was strikingly handsome, and equally well dressed. She appeared young, and no fault could be found with her *tournure*, which might be called distinguished; though at times she looked as if she had entered upon a new scene: but the shyness consequent upon a début was more strongly manifested in her countenance than in her demeanour.

"Can you tell me who that is?" said Lady

Colemore, turning to a gentleman who stood near her: he was a man about thirty—that is to say, he had one of those slight and well-proportioned figures which do not tally with their possessors' being beyond thirty, whether they are or not. In this instance the pale complexion, the steady eye, and the cold but forcible expression, were symptoms that the fire of youth had subsided; but, in recompense, there was the mark of talent imprinted on a countenance so handsome as to interest any beholder who viewed it closely.

"Who is that?" said Lady Colemore, addressing this individual.

"Harcourt's wife."

"Dear me!—what, that person?"

"Yes. Harcourt has been abroad these three years. They are come from Paris."

"Did you know them abroad?"

"No: Harcourt is an old acquaintance of mine; but we only met again since our mutual return to England."

"Then, what *is* she?—do you know?"

"I was staying with them at Easter. She has good manners. Her conduct, I believe, so far, is irreproachable."

"Oh! what was she?"

"An Opera-dancer. Harcourt married her three or four years ago."

"Ah, yes!—I recollect—an uncommonly foolish thing. It was very, very much talked of at the time. I don't remember seeing her before."

"They have been abroad ever since they married. At Paris she was much admired."

"Do *you* like her?"

"She is agreeable and very piquante; and I believe she has shown some merit, considering what she was."

Lady Colemore's inquiries were terminated by the answerer taking an opportunity of disappearing from her vicinity, and in quest of Mrs. Harcourt, too—for he was soon to be seen talking with her.

"I never know whether I like Mr. d'Arcy or not," said Lady Colemore to a middle-aged, caustic-looking man, who stood near her. "His manners are cold; and there is sometimes a superciliousness about him, which he may not mean, but which is highly disagreeable."

"It is not easy to be very certain as to what Mr. d'Arcy means; his manner is often

unpleasing. I have heard him say the severest things to those against whom, in their absence, I never heard him proffer an opinion. He is a scorner of trivial abuse, and so much the better. George d'Arcy has friends as well as enemies; and I have prognosticated that he will, some day, discover how much he is a man of talent. He is elected for C——, and will have an opportunity of showing himself in the House of Commons."

Harcourt and Emily had now been married long enough to be thoroughly acquainted. They had passed most of their time on the Continent, particularly at Paris. Before this period Harcourt had made no attempt to introduce his wife in London. Now, however, he was willing and anxious this should be done; but not at the expense of any trouble to himself; for that, in any shape, was always the thing that Harcourt continued to hate most.

Mrs. Harcourt soon learnt to understand her husband's character. She discovered that he possessed more vanity than affection. He was spoilt and capricious; and capricious to

her; for he sometimes regretted the sacrifice he had made by so unequal an alliance.

Emily felt a little in awe of him when they were much alone, and she was not very sorry when the distractions of society caused them to be more separated, and relieved her from attending to every turn of a selfish husband's summons.

By the aid of a few of his friends, she began to make her way in what is called the exclusive society of London. Her beauty, her dress, and her natural quickness, did much for her in a circle always gasping for novelty. The dandies protected her, one and all; and, with them, Emily, it must be acknowledged, felt more at her ease than with ladies, whose reception of her she occasionally disliked, and always feared.

The Harcourts and D'Arcy returned from the Continent about the same time. They had not met for ages, and D'Arcy, being idle, accepted the invitation of his old companion to pay him a visit at Easter. A few days spent in a country house make us soon acquainted with its inmates.

D'Arcy and Mrs. Harcourt thought each

other mutually improved; and when both met again in town, he became a frequent guest at her house.

D'Arcy was desirous of quitting diplomacy, and of coming into Parliament, if he could find a prospect of doing so, which was at this time held out by a connexion of his own—Lord G——.

Lord G—— had no direct heir to his property, and, during his life, he was fond of dispensing it indiscriminately to those he liked. He remembered having known D'Arcy when he was only an Eton boy: he remembered having thought him clever then; and though he had afterwards lost sight of him, now that they met again, he thought sufficiently well of him to offer him a seat in the House as the representative of the borough of C——.

D'Arcy declared frankly that he would gladly accede to this proposition; but he doubted whether he could afford to renounce his appointment, in order to attend to what are pleasingly termed "parliamentary duties."

Lord G——, in the handsomest manner, offered to make a settlement upon D'Arcy for life.

D'Arcy was not very much surprised at this generous proposal; for he knew his kinsman G——'s character. He refused it, however, with great decision,—adding, notwithstanding, that he found the borough of C—— too great a temptation, and that he would accept it, and take his chance for futurity.

"Mr. d'Arcy," said Mrs. Harcourt, slightly colouring, "I know I have not said as much to you as other people have done, but do not suppose that I admire your talents less. I have only felt shy of offering my humble congratulations on your success."

These words were one day spoken by Mrs. Harcourt during a morning visit which D'Arcy made her. They alluded to his recent fame in the House of Commons; for D'Arcy, on taking his seat, lost no time in displaying the vein of eloquence which he possessed in an eminent degree. He was suddenly cried up, and many were the prognostications of his future career. To great quickness, D'Arcy joined a hardihood of manner and a boldness of sentiment, which, in many cases, are allied to genius, and which always give promise of it. His speeches became the general topic of conversation. In

short, there was that sort of moonshine celebrity instantly attaching itself to him, which is always in store for every *débutant* who distinguishes himself by striking out something new.

D'Arcy smiled, and appeared pleased with Mrs. Harcourt's acknowledgment of his fame. She spoke, too, with something like embarrassment, and with a hesitation D'Arcy could not account for; although she had just made professions of shyness, he had not felt at all inclined to believe them.

"At last," continued Emily, "at last you will be appreciated."

"At last! at last, Mrs. Harcourt. The world just now is kind enough to flatter me, perhaps without foundation; but you say at last, as if you thought this should have occurred sooner."

"And so it might."

"Have you, then, been one of those who were kind enough to suppose me something better than I may have seemed."

"At least in one sense I have, certainly, for I have never forgotten an act of kindness I received from you long ago, when I knew

you slightly, and when I did not like you, probably because I thought you disliked me: it was feeling as I did towards you that made me the more grateful that day that——" Emily paused.

"I remember what you refer to, but you overrate a kindness which would have been equally shown by any gentleman. Do you know I was curious to learn to whom that letter was addressed?"

"Surely you read the address?" exclaimed Mrs. Harcourt.

"No; for if you recollect, the letter was stolen from me before I could have seen the superscription."

"Upon what little circumstances the most important events of our lives may turn!" said Emily, musingly.

"I imagined the letter was for Harcourt," observed D'Arcy.

"That was not the case."

"Indeed!" answered D'Arcy with surprise; "for some one whom you liked better?"

"I must confess that it was. I was attached to a person who would have been a suitable match, if the ambitious views of my mother,

and my own, too, for I will be just, had not made me determine, if I could, to marry Mr. Harcourt. I received at that time a letter from M. Larray, offering me his hand. In a moment of pique against Harcourt, and of returning feeling towards Henry Larray, I wrote to accept him. I knew that with my mother's consent I could never send this letter—she had already endeavoured to prevent my receiving his proposal. It was you who so unexpectedly came to my assistance. Afterwards I made up the quarrel with Mr. Harcourt, and once more I listened to my mother's arguments; and I fear, when I heard from you of the singular fate that had befallen my epistle, I was not as sorry as I ought to have been."

"But your kindness on that occasion I have never forgotten," continued Mrs. Harcourt, with animation.

"I am much flattered by this recollection: I feel consoled also for having lost the letter, since I might not otherwise have had the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Harcourt so frequently."

"Ah, say nothing very civil to me, pray,

Mr. d'Arcy," replied Emily very archly: "I shall think you dislike me if you begin to compliment."

"Why so?"

"You used to make me speeches formerly, when, though you were so kind to me on this occasion, I know you did not like me."

"And you have not forgotten that, all this time?"

"You see I have not."

D'Arcy, when he took his leave that day, inquired of Mrs. Harcourt if she was always at home at the same hour?

CHAPTER VII.

"I hate inconstancy. I loathe, detest,
Abhor, condemn, abjure the mortal made
Of such quicksilver clay that in his breast
No permanent foundation can be laid;
Love, constant love, has been my constant guest,
And yet last night, being at a masquerade,
I saw the prettiest creature, fresh from Milan,
Which gave me some sensations, like a villain."

BYRON.

"Must I have always tears to kiss away?"

FAZIO.

"OH, George, I thought you never would come home!" exclaimed a gentle and familiar voice to D'Arcy as he entered his sitting-room.

It was the voice of the beautiful Violet Woodville, and the mistress of D'Arcy!

She was changed from the period of her first introduction to the reader. Her complexion was much paler, and her beauty had altered its character, but beautiful indeed she still remained.

She had been sitting up, late as it was, waiting the return of D'Arcy. Books were on the

table, the pianoforte was open, and a guitar was lying on a chair, but yet Violet had a listless look, without any appearance of having employed herself.

"Is it late?" said D'Arcy, carelessly. "Why did you sit up? You are very pale; you would have done better to have been asleep."

"I cannot sleep," answered Violet, in a tone of despair.

"What *is* the matter, my dear Violet? Have you heard anything of your parents, at last?"

"No, D'Arcy, worse than that, for I can hear nothing of them, and I give it up. Oh God!"

"Nonsense, dearest; you get nervous, and you exaggerate everything. Whom did you send?"

"Howell went, and he found our old house, but the people who were in it had lived there a twelvemonth, and they had taken it of a family called Jones. They had heard of no one of the name of Woodville having anything to do with the house. Then I directed Howell to go to my father's landlord, in the city, who was a merchant; but he is dead, and his nephew, who is his heir, knew nothing of the

tenants, or hardly of the house; however, he directed his clerks to look over his books, and from them it could only be ascertained that before his uncle's death my father must have left the house, for these Joneses were the inhabitants at that time, and there was a note of the receipt of the year's rent up to last October two years."

"It is most strange," said D'Arcy, thinking aloud, "that neither Dupas, nor your mother, should have taken any means to communicate with you."

"Why not my father, as soon as either of them?" demanded Violet, hastily. "My father would have been the first, not the last one, to forgive me."

"I don't know what to advise you," answered D'Arcy, evasively; "but I must say, that if the conduct of your relations is so very unnatural, you need care very little about them."

"You forget that I have deserved it all. How did I repay their goodness, especially my father's! Can I ever forget his affection?—D'Arcy, you never appreciated my father; you did not know him enough, and you cannot understand my misery. 'Oh Father, which art

in heaven!' cried Violet, with sudden grief, and sinking on her knees, with upraised hands and eyes,—'Grant me but to see him once more, were it but to hear him curse me. My God,—my God, hear my prayer, and punish me as I deserve; let me die in wretchedness, but *this* desire—let it be granted unto me!'"

"This is shocking!" exclaimed D'Arcy, pacing up and down the room.

He must have been moved by the scene before him, and his heart must have been sensible of pity, and perhaps of remorse; but these sentiments were mingled with displeasure at their being called forth, and his love was lessened at that moment in the same ratio that he felt his moral comfort disturbed.

"This is a great bore, and very unpleasant for me," composed the sort of idea that pervaded D'Arcy's mind, without defining it to himself in words.

"Violet," said he, after a slight pause, "you must not vex yourself in this way. You exert your energies too violently, and you exhaust your strength; to-morrow you will be ill. As it is, your health is anything but what it used to be. The circumstances that ought the most

to reconcile you to be in ignorance of the abode of your relations, seem to have exactly the contrary effect. Calm yourself, my dear Violet, and pray remember that these scenes distress me, and that really I cannot help—. In fact, it is their fault entirely. I think them highly to blame. Surely, however, there must be some of your father's friends, whose name you know, and who can inform us of him?"

"You know the inquiries I have already made, and that I can learn nothing more than that they went abroad two years since; and that my father was ill. If he got better he talked of going to America. The Octavians and Mr. Brown are gone to America—the people with whom my mother was most intimate. It appears strange, that in three years I should have lost all clue to such near relations; but it seems as if everything about them was forgotten. Can you, then, wonder that I am profoundly miserable?"

"Those are strong words—I might have hoped to have been cared for, and deemed by you as something—am I to be considered as nothing?"

"Ah, D'Arcy," answered Violet, in a tone

of reproach; "why do you say this to me?—Those words should not come from you—so futile too, at such a moment. *You* not cared for!—*You* considered as nothing! Nothing! My God!" she a second time ejaculated, as if again in prayer.

"Your parents, in abandoning you, love, behaved very ill," continued D'Arcy. "I can only say, put it to any one and he will agree with me, that they have no claim to the grief you show about them, to the total destruction of your peace and of mine, if this is to go on. Now, dearest, let us talk of something else. You never told me how you liked the new opera?"

D'Arcy's fame did not rest upon a momentary celebrity. He followed it up with other triumphs, and he was soon looked upon as a rising star amongst the competitors for the honours which ambition holds out.

D'Arcy was not surprised at his own success, because he always felt the secret consciousness of talent; he did not feel very much elated by it either. Lady Colemore would

have said that his frigidity caused him to take so sober a view of his success; whereas it was a natural consequence of having lost all the freshness which gilds the feelings of our youth—beautiful even in their fleeting brilliancy.

D'Arcy nevertheless was ambitious. A political career seemed the one most suited to him now; and it offered the chance of some illusions as yet unproved by him, of disgust and disappointments of a nature as yet unfelt. It was to be the means of turning over another leaf in the book of life, and of learning some of those extraordinary contradictions in mankind, which offer such fields of speculation to those who like to philosophize on human nature.

D'Arcy therefore employed his hours busily; and in his lounging moments he resorted to the house of his friend Harcourt.

He felt interested in noting the progress of Emily Norris, who was gradually fixing herself in the world as a beauty of high renown, and a woman of fashion into the bargain.

Harcourt, although he was well pleased that this should be the case, was not the less *ennuyé* at home, or less inclined to be out of humour

whenever he felt in the mood. Emily managed him with a tact that amused D'Arcy.

He began too to have an opinion of her *sagesse*, for, with a great many admirers, not one was distinguished by her.

Once or twice it occurred to D'Arcy how curious she must be to learn of him something of her former friend, Violet Woodville—but only once or twice did this idea arise; for it was in the society of Mrs. Harcourt that D'Arcy approached the nearest towards forgetting the existence of Violet Woodville.

If she had not lately made him uncomfortable with himself; if her tearful eyes, her pale countenance, and her unjoyous manner, had not been so many means of inflicting reproach upon him; Violet would not have lost any of D'Arcy's love.

Few men stand the trial of being bored. Ill-treatment of any description, manual and moral, they will bear with infinite patience and infinite love; but to be bored, to be roasted by means of one person in the slow fire of self-reproach,—no man's love will stand that, or woman's either, I fear.

The man or woman who subjects the other

to this ordeal, depends solely on the goodness of heart of the person on whom the trial is made; and Violet was beginning to render herself dependant upon the goodness of D'Arcy's heart.

"Is that a new guest of yours?" asked D'Arcy, one day that he was paying Mrs. Harcourt a morning visit. His question had reference to a smart and indolent-looking lady who just quitted the room.

"Yes; I met her at dinner the other day. She was very civil in wishing to make my acquaintance, and has since called upon me."

"Do you mean to cultivate her?"

"I have not thought about it, but it would be unwise in me, who am such a decided *parvenue,* to decline her overtures."

"But you may shun a person more or less."

"Oh, certainly. But what is your objection to Mrs. Fitzmorris?"

"I think her a dangerous woman."

"*Tracassière?*"

"Yes; and also always ready to do anything, however extraordinary, if it suit her purpose."

At this moment Harcourt entered the room, and flung himself upon a sofa.

"What a confounded hot day it is! Where is one to get good ice? Tuccio is so out of the way. Good morning, D'Arcy! Whom have you had here, Emily?"

"Mrs. Fitzmorris has just left me."

"Ah! what, D'Arcy's old flame?—and you were here, D'Arcy? What do you think she is grown into?"

"A lady is never the better for wear; but, upon my word, I still think her a pretty woman."

"Oh! Emily would be jealous if I made love to her," continued Harcourt, who was in a very affable humour that morning.

"And I all this time did not know she was a flame of Mr. d'Arcy's!" exclaimed Mrs. Harcourt, in a tone of surprise.

"How do you get on with Mrs. Fitzmorris, D'Arcy?"

"We are excellent friends, I believe. Did it not strike you so, Mrs. Harcourt?"

"I cannot say that; but I see you know her well, and any advice I get from you on that head I shall attend to."

D'Arcy had a house in one of the terraces facing the Regent's Park: he had taken care to have it prettily furnished; and the sunny aspect and enlivening green expanse, on which the eye could dwell from the windows, rendered it a cheerful abode, and one in which Violet would have lived most contentedly if—but there are always ifs.

D'Arcy had really taken pains to secure every comfort for her. She had a carriage at her command, and his servants were taught to respect her as their undisputed mistress. He endeavoured to make her preside at his table, and wished at once to introduce her to all his male friends—but this she refused. Abroad, she obliged him willingly in this particular, but in England, where she had once been so well known, Violet shrunk from such an exposure—for such she deemed it.

"You must have a box at the Opera for the alternate weeks at least, Violet," said D'Arcy to her one day; "and the French play is good this year. Pray take a box whenever you like, dearest. I only wish I could induce you to enter into more society."

Pleased with his efforts to render her hap-

pier, a smile something like contentment beamed in Violet Woodville's eyes, and she exclaimed—

"While I can think you love me as much as you used to do, I cannot be quite miserable!"

"Well, then, you might be always happy if it depended on your security of my love, my own little Violet!—is it not so?"

At this moment the servant entered with two three-cornered notes addressed to D'Arcy. D'Arcy gave one to Violet, telling her to read the contents, while he perused the other.

Violet read as follows:—

"Pray dine with us to-day. I have a great mind, if you say 'yes,' to invite a dangerous friend of yours: she would be delighted.

"Yours,

"E. HARCOURT."

"Emily,—Emily Norris!" said Violet, letting the note drop from her hands,—"I did not know you were so intimate with her that,—— and *she* is able to ask you thus to her house! Oh! what a difference there is between us!—tell me, D'Arcy," she asked with sudden impetuosity, "do you think, after all, that woman is better than I am?"

"No,—neither so good, nor so handsome; but you know, I stayed with the Harcourts in the country, and of course I must be pretty well acquainted with her."

"That's true, but I have not heard you speak of her."

"I did not know you wanted particularly to hear about her, and I have not encouragement to tell you any thing connected with the pomps and vanities, &c. &c.; you are always out of spirits now when I come home."

Violet gave a gentle involuntary sigh, but still she continued: "Then do you see Emily very often now?"

"No,—yes, I go there when it suits me,—when I have time," answered D'Arcy, rather impatiently.

Violet felt rebuffed, and thinking, hoping that she was to blame, and not D'Arcy, for this impatience, she playfully turned the subject by asking who the other note was from, which he held in his hand, written on pink paper, and sealed with green wax.

"Yes," said D'Arcy, "exactly like a ——;" he stopped short.

"Like a what?" asked Violet, innocently.

"Nothing, my love,—like a fool as she is;" and he threw the coloured note on the table.

"May I read it?" Violet demanded.

"I must see you. I have something very particular to say to you. I will be at home for you till four o'clock; you will come, bad as you are, *n'est ce pas?*"

"Shall you go? and who is the lady, for I cannot decipher these illegible initials?"

"Mrs. Fitzmorris. As for going,—yes, if it will amuse you to hear what I am wanted for."

"Oh, pray go," answered Violet with sweetness: for she had not lately seen D'Arcy so good-humoured as on this day.

Having, therefore, nothing more urgent to call him elsewhere, towards four o'clock D'Arcy went to pay the desired visit to Mrs. Fitzmorris.

I have described this lady before. She was the identical, languishing, pale, blue-eyed Matilda, to whom D'Arcy had been obliged to give her *congé*, in a morning call, some years previous to the present era. Time had altered her a little, and Matilda was grown to look older, which is not a thing of course,

because there are actually many with whom time is the means of effacing himself. Who has not occasionally seen a lady at forty, comparatively young, and good-looking, who at thirty contrived to seem aged and dowdy? Mrs. Fitzmorris, however, was grown to look a *little* older; she had adopted a stronger shade of rouge, and was more elaborately dressed, and with more affectation; in short, she looked more decidedly like a very foolish woman than formerly. We seldom with our years correct our foibles, whatever may be the case with great failings; and thus the imbecility arising from a trumpery vanity increases, if possible, when a woman has once been its wholesale victim.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mrs. Fitzmorris, when D'Arcy entered her drawing-room, "it is kind of you to come; but why have not you been to see me before?"

"I have tried, and you were always out."

"Oh, of course, when you call at six o'clock."

"But I am so often engaged."

"Yes, yes, you are becoming an orator; well, I am glad of your success."

D'Arcy bowed; made some pretty speech in

return, and then said, "Tell me, did you really want to see me about something in particular this morning?"

"You vain creature!—Did you think I made the excuse for the sake of *vos beaux yeux?*" And so saying, Mrs. Fitzmorris had very much the air of such being the case.

"By no means; you know I never was vain, and besides——"

"Besides, you are otherwise occupied, I am well aware." Mrs. Fitzmorris played with her rings, and looked down.

"Indeed! who has told you so?"

"As if I could remember, or should tell you if I did. Well, but isn't it true that you have quite forgotten old times?" asked Mrs. Fitzmorris, with a most coquettish expression.

"Rest assured, as much as you can possibly desire that I should do," answered D'Arcy, promptly.

"I did not say, I *desired* it;—that's your version, not mine."

"Then," said D'Arcy, "you see I have forestalled your wishes."

The way in which this was said, betrayed at once that D'Arcy had no intention to renew

the old affair with his companion, and betrayed a coldness, if not dislike, easily seen through, and severely felt by Mrs. Fitzmorris. She bit her lip, and coloured with anger.

"You need not say things so pointedly. I have eyes as well as others; and was not going to make love to you, as you seem to be so much afraid that I should. In common with all the world, I am quite aware that the ground is taken. How do you find Mrs. Harcourt?"

"Is that the lady the world is so obliging as to couple my name with?"

"The poor world is not to blame;—it can hardly help itself, I think."

"It both can and shall," said D'Arcy, indignantly.

"Oh, don't be angry. Silencing the world must of course depend upon yourself. You have only to give her up. If you care for her reputation, there is no time to lose."

"So as to leave it to choice, whether it shall be said that I am defeated, or only tired of the lady."

"Once, when I was considered the object, they said the latter, I remember. The chances are equal—no, that would be too good-natured.

The world will say that you are tired of her: she is the woman, and the weakest; and when was a favourable construction ever put where a bad one could be given? Still, as the notoriety is only in the bud, it will be talked of for two days, and then forgotten. Shall I begin by denying it, and stand up as the champion of Mrs. Harcourt? Come to my Opera-box to-night, instead of hers, and I will."

"That would be too sudden a retreat."

"Oh, I see!" answered Mrs. Fitzmorris, impatiently. "Do you think her handsome?"

"Exceedingly!"

"Undeniably vulgar?"

"In saying so, you discover your usual originality of opinion. I entirely differ from you. But why do you hate her?"

"I hate her?—Not I!"

"You forget," said D'Arcy, "how well we know each other; and that I am aware you always see people black or white, according to your prejudices."

Some credit was due to Mrs. Fitzmorris for the apparent good humour with which she bore the uncivil observations of her quondam lover. She was, in fact, naturally good-tem-

pered, but also very spiteful—a union of qualities not unfrequently witnessed.

"What has become of that beautiful girl you seduced and ran away with?" she asked; and, observing D'Arcy hesitated, she added—"Oh! it was no secret, and affects no one's reputation, except the poor girl's, which you destroyed so long ago. So, as we do know each other so well, I thought I might ask that question. I know she lived with you abroad. Does she still?"

"She does."

"Poor thing!—Do you care for her?"

"I really do,—why do you inquire?"

"And is she constant, well-behaved, or does she make you jealous?"

"She never has, hitherto."

"She is beautiful, is not she? I am sure you like her," pursued Mrs. Fitzmorris, and looking curiously in D'Arcy's face, as if to read there a true solution to her inquiry.

"She is beautiful, handsomer, far handsomer than any other woman I ever met with in my life," D'Arcy replied, rising to take his leave.

He felt it a secret reproach, that such a

woman should be able to speak profanely of Violet Woodville. He was glad to declare her beauty, and to convey, in that respect, his opinion of Mrs. Fitzmorris's inferiority,—but he was more glad to escape from speaking at all with reference to a subject that galled him; and D'Arcy quitted the presence of Mrs. Fitzmorris more than ever disposed to avoid her in future.

It is the most useless thing to define the character of a person, because, if you were to do so with the utmost exactitude, it is almost a certainty that if their entire history should be written, in some one circumstance the practice of the individual would be found at variance with his or her moral attributes.

For instance, Mrs. Fitzmorris was about as heartless, as frivolous, as worthless as any woman could well be; yet, such as she was, she had once loved, had felt herself capable of sacrifices, and had shed tears of extreme sorrow at the time when she saw that she was neglected by a man she preferred. She did not love well, I mean heroically, but still her love was an improvement, compared to anything else she was capable of either doing or feeling.

D'Arcy, too, after a fashion, had seemed to like her once. She was then young and pretty, and very lively; she afforded him amusement, added to which, he saw he was the first possessor of all the heart she had to give. The advances were rather on her side at the beginning, but she succeeded in captivating D'Arcy for a time. After a while he was inclined to grow tired of this *liaison*, and, from the excessive imprudence of Mrs. Fitzmorris was alarmed lest even her patient husband should be exposed to the absolute necessity of discovering that secret known to all the world, which M. Balzac so pithily declares since the memory of man it has never betrayed.

In the pursuit of Violet Woodville, D'Arcy often forgot Mrs. Fitzmorris altogether; then, when she upbraided him for his carelessness, she had to bear with coldness and fault-finding,—condemned to discover the most painful of all truths, that your lover has not only ceased to love you, but that he leaves you in doubt if he ever loved you at all.

Mrs. Fitzmorris bore numerous mortifications proving this to be her case, with more calmness than many women would have done.

The reasons were, that she was, as has been said, possessed of an inherent good temper; and, secondly, she was devoid of the delicacy of sentiment which would have made any other person deeply sensible to half her provocations.

She did not go to one ball the fewer, or spend one half hour the less before her looking-glass, nor, even in thought, did she deny herself the consolation of looking forward to repairing his loss.

She soon heard of D'Arcy having fallen in love with Violet Woodville, and of her being his mistress; but this fact did not distress her, as a ten minutes' flirtation would have done, if he had been seen to have one with a lady in her own set. Finally, when, after the absence of years, D'Arcy returned to his country, and began, in worldly parlance, to throw himself at the feet of Mrs. Harcourt, he gave Mrs. Fitzmorris the utmost annoyance it was in his power to inflict.

Mrs. Harcourt was a young beauty, invested with the charm of novelty, and, consequently, with a whole cloud of admirers hovering about her. It was quite natural that Mrs. Fitz-

morris should envy her beyond measure, and that she should try to do all she could to take D'Arcy from her.

She did try to effect this; and, as D'Arcy said, she was always ready to do anything, however extraordinary, to suit her purpose. She had what the French designate as "*une mauvaise tête.*"

In obedience to d'Arcy's wishes, Violet went frequently to the Opera: with what mixed sentiments she went there at first, it is impossible to say, still it was the only amusement that gave her pleasure. New operas and new ballets had started into existence since she had last visited the King's Theatre; and Violet was exceedingly fond of music.

D'Arcy very often stayed part of the time in her box. If he told her he was not likely to come at all, she seldom went. As a sort of chaperone, Violet took with her a Neapolitan maid, Marietta, an ugly, stout, good-humoured Italian girl of five-and-twenty. She drew the curtain of her box as closely as possible, and endeavoured to escape the observation of every one.

One night, when she was more than usually

absorbed in the acting of Malibran, she discovered that she was an object of notice to a lady who sat in the third box from her, and almost fronting her. Violet could not avoid perceiving that she was watched by this person, and she wondered who it could be. She was, apparently, a full-blown personage, with more rouge and more boldness than any lady (off the stage) she had ever seen before. Her whole appearance, in short, denoted her character to be equivocal.

After being stared at some time, Violet was dismayed by the lady's eyes suddenly emitting sparkling gleams of recognition, combined with all the gesticulation with which foreigners can distort their features. It may be supposed poor Violet made no signs of reply, and was lost in wondering dread of who the stranger could be; when, all at once, it flashed upon her that it was a face she had formerly known. Violet longed for D'Arcy to enlighten her, if possible; but he had already been to her box that night, and did not come again.

On the next morning, about one o'clock, as she was pensively inhaling the fragrance of the mignionette, at her pretty drawing-room win-

dow, the servant unexpectedly announced a visitor; and, almost before she was aware of her presence, Violet found herself embraced by the stranger who had recognized her the night before.

It was not for a few succeeding minutes that she was able to recollect the features of Madlle. Céleste. Our readers have, perhaps, likewise forgotten her. But Violet Woodville's want of memory was excusable. From a coquettish French girl, pert-looking, but very pretty, Céleste had spread out into a fat, coarse woman. She was rouged immoderately; her once clear brown skin was painted white, and her eyebrows appeared to have been rubbed with a blackened cork. Her dress was of the most outré fashion; and short petticoats being then worn, the shortness of those of Madlle. Céleste was positively alarming. Altogether, her person displayed the appearance of a lengthened apprenticeship in vice, and that, too, not of the best order.

Violet was struck with dismay at being familiarly accosted by such a personage.

The coldness of her reception Mlle. Céleste either did not, or would not see. She drew a

chair, and left Violet to recover her surprise, while she talked for both; and while she did so, her eyes seemed to be walking round the room, for the purpose of taking the minutest cognizance of everything in it that they could.

"*Est-ce que le rez-de-chaussée est à vous aussi, Mademoiselle?*"

Violet bowed an affirmative, on which Céleste made large eyes, and exclaimed,—"*Oh! la maison est toute à vous donc?* Ah, vous êtes bien, c'a se voit; mais c'est toujours M. d'Arcy qui vous met dans vos meubles, n'est ce pas?"

Violet Woodville never felt a stronger feeling of disgust than that she now entertained towards this woman, and her distant manner would have been tantamount to a dismissal, if the brass of Mlle. Céleste had not been proof against everything. She went on talking unconcernedly, she made answers for herself, absolutely astounding Violet by her behaviour. At the same time it was now and then impossible not to smile at the strange light in which she exhibited herself, and, while she went on talking, it more than once occurred to her unfortunate auditor to question whether Mademoiselle was most knave or fool.

Céleste recounted her own history since they had been last in presence of each other. She said she had been very ill used, and had suffered severely from *la jalousie brutale* of Lord W. "*Est-il jaloux, lui?*" said the fair one, interrupting herself, and illustrating her meaning with a jerk of her head and a turn with one eye.

"Who do you mean, Mdlle. Céleste?"

"*Mais!* M. d'Arcy? *Il n'est pas jaloux, Madame. Vraiment! Il a l'air tout au contraire. C'est ce que je dis, la phisiognomie dit toujours faux. Mais que disois-je tout à l'heure?* But what is it I talk French for dat speaks English? Would you credit *comme j'ai été maltraitée?* Lord Villiom *s'avisa* to be *jaloux* of a cousin of my own, *un jeune homme charmant,* and perfect the gentleman in his *principes;* and one day he was visiting at me, Lord Villiom put him from my house by de vhole flight of steps, from top to bottom. I had fits, *des evanouissemens effroyables. Ah! le souvenir de mes malheurs m'est bien pénible,*"—and Céleste, at this period of her narration, sunk her voice down to a soprano.

Violet maintained silence, and again hoped

she would go; but she hoped in vain. Violet Woodville, in the meantime, sat before her, her cheeks dyed with a blush of mingled shame and anger, caused by the cruel necessity of enduring the presence of such a character. She persevered in making short replies to her communications, but this only encouraged Mdlle. Céleste to talk the more, and to lengthen the details of her own history. Perhaps she imagined she was amusing her victim.

"I was carried to a hospital, tinking to die; I had not money nor friends: dat young brute, my Lord Villiom, behaved so scandalous unto me,—*Oh, cet homme doit être brûlé vif. Bah!*"

"But your cousin, Madame, should have taken care of you," Violet condescended to interpose; for she felt rather interested, in spite of herself, at this climax of Céleste's misfortunes.

"*Ah! lui! mais il étoit obligé de retourner en Brétagne, rejoindre ses parens; c'est un jeune homme qui a des amis très illustres.* But I tell, all in short. After dat I got vell. But my confessor talk very much to me ven I was ill. He persuade me to lead unquiet life, *très retirée.* He very kind old man to me, and

did make me tink all sorts of disagreeable tings. And he was means of getting me a place vith a noble family in the provinces, as English governess,—you see I speak de English quite fluently; and it was not people dat knew *Paris; ancienne Noblesse très roccoco, extrémement roccoco. Cependant mon malheureux destin, hélas! m'a poursuivi.*

"I was not *à l'abri* to the unfortunate passion that the brother of my pupils conceived for me. I said all I could to induce him not to molest me. *Enfin, au moment de se noyer il m'a arraché des pleurs. Sa mère barbare nous a découverts, c'est à dire mes pleurs. Et elle s'est indignement conduite avec moi.* I did leave their house. I did arrive in England,—*j'etois sans ressources,*—de Opera was over, de town empty, de men all gone,—*aussi j'avois des principes, j'avois toujours peur du diable depuis ma maladie affreuse.* I did get into a Scotch family to teach de French. I was to join them in Scotland: c'etoit encore des gens de province. *Eh bien, concévez mon horreur!* I go to dese people, and find myself *releguée* in an old tower in de nord of Scotland. Rain continuel, never cease,—on vat dey call fine

days was only small rain, vat dey call mist. Then not-ting to eat, *des légumes crues et soupe maigre,*—no fire,—*c'etoit défendu par leur religion, je crois, jusqu' au mois de Novembre au moins.* On Sundays they go to church, and hear one man speak in de Gaelic, langage *des Druides,—des gens qui existoient avant le temps de Louis Quatorze.* This last three hours, and then was translated for de *famille.*

"My pupils had all red heads, and spoke with voices tearing away my ears;—with hands and feet, and *une tournure si affreuse, que je n'ose vous en faire la description. Puis pas un seul homme! Enfin je me suis sauvée après trois mois de prison parmi ce peuple sauvage; c'etoit avoir goûté de la purgatoire d'avance, aussi à cause de cela j'ai obtenu absolution de tous mes pêchés pendant six mois. Désormais jamais—je ne songerai jamais à me placer; et voilà deux ans déjà que je me trouve très bien.* Pas comme *vous, ma chère, cependant,*" said Céleste, once more casting her eyes round the apartment. "You very comfortable here, I see. *Est-ce que les meubles sont entièrement à vous?*"

"I don't understand you, Mademoiselle!" answered Violet, with a look of astonishment.

"*Oh! moi aussi j'ai un joli apartement, mais M. le Comte m'a donné les meubles, c'est que je trouve cela fort bien: ça nous reste toujours, même quand on déménage,*" and the French woman winked and laughed. "*Connoissez vous mon ami, le Comte Booby? jeune homme très galant, et facile à vivre? M. d'Arcy doit le connoitre.*"

"I beg your pardon," said Violet Woodville, rising from her seat with burning cheeks, and unable any longer to bear the presence of her companion, "I beg your pardon, Mademoiselle, but I have an engagement, and am obliged to leave you."

This could not be misunderstood, even by Céleste, and she rose to take her leave, declaring, however, she would come again another day.

As she went out of the room she turned round with a knowing look, and observed, "*Il faut tâcher de se faire donner les meubles. C'est un grand avantage, croyez moi, ma chère.*"

"What am I come to!" thought Violet to herself when she was alone, "that this wretched

creature should venture to obtrude herself upon me thus."

The door burst open, and D'Arcy entered.

"My God, Violet!" he exclaimed, "what society have you learnt to keep all at once? how did that woman, that painted French devil, get into my house?"

"Oh! D'Arcy, she has been with me all this time: I could not help it."

D'Arcy rang the bell; on the servant entering, he said, "Let the person who is just gone away be refused in future all admittance to this house, on any plea whatsoever."

"You cannot be angry with me that I should have been forced to see her;—you may suppose my horror of her," said Violet, deprecatingly, for she saw that D'Arcy was angry.

"I was surprised that you, who are so very inconveniently particular sometimes at seeing my friends, should be receiving a morning visit from such a woman, the boldest one even of her kind, I think."

"Well, she thought she had, nevertheless, *a right* to visit me."

"Psha," answered D'Arcy, coldly, and coldly his manner struck upon the heart of poor Violet.

She could not forbear saying, "I told you, D'Arcy, that I should live to be despised. What is it that has brought this woman upon me?"

"Spare me this sort of side-winded reproach."

"I beg your pardon, if I have offended; it was impossible to help expressing my disgust at that coryphée from the *Palais Royal!*"

D'Arcy spoke without feeling, and then withdrew, for he was *bored;* and Violet remained alone, to be preyed upon by the mortification occasioned by the events of the morning.

"The world's regard, that soothes, though half untrue,"*

was utterly wanting. She felt herself an outcast, and that he who had reduced her to be so considered, on a sort of *pas* with Madlle. Céleste, was himself angry with her that this should now be proved to be the case.

The injustice of the world is proverbial, yet Violet Woodville had not counted on being so soon exposed to its evil chances.

* Campbell.

CHAPTER VIII.

"————— jealousy
Belonged not to her noble nature.
Humble she was, unconscious of the charms
Which might have turned the heads of half the world.
But she was trusting—full of confidence.
And now—what devil is't that makes men's hearts?—
She is forsaken—and, Oh Heavens! for whom?"
OLD PLAY.

ONE day, at the dinner-hour, D'Arcy did not appear. Violet fancied she must be mistaken in understanding that he had intended to dine at home.

"Do you know if Mr. d'Arcy has any engagement to-day?" she inquired of the servant.

"Don't know, Mam. Mr. d'Arcy dines, most probably, at Mrs. Harcourt's, Mam."

"Why most probably at Mrs. Harcourt's?"

"Master dines there most days that he does not dine any where else, Mam." "If he

does not dine there, he is sure to be intending to go there, or he will be to be heard of there, Mam, if you have any message to send."

It was an under servant who spoke. Howell would have had more tact.

Violet Woodvile returned no answer; but she sat, for nearly half an hour afterwards, in a profound reverie.

For some time past she had seen that D'Arcy was less at home, and that he was far less kind to her than formerly. But, not being of a jealous disposition, Violet, with her usual amiability, had attributed this change to herself alone. She was aware that she did not receive him with a smile, as formerly, and that she had not the power of amusing him: the depression of her spirits increased so much, that she was sometimes glad of D'Arcy's absence, at the same time that her existence hung upon him. She was like a plant that requires the sun, but withers if too much exposed to it. She could not always endure the restraint of appearing happy, while her heart was profoundly miserable; and she could

neither conceal her grief, nor bear that D'Arcy should have the pain of witnessing it.

On the plea of the change within herself, she excused D'Arcy's frequent absences and occasional instances of unkindness in his manner. She had not grown to think that he actually *loved* her less; and if she had, it was still another thing to think that he had learnt to love some one else better.

Many women might have jumped to this conclusion more readily; but then Violet was not naturally jealous, and always felt inclined to think favourably of every one. She was fearful of wronging D'Arcy, even in thought; for it would have been the means of destroying her last illusion. Nevertheless the clouds of sorrow were gathering over her head more and more heavily each day. Alas! for this fair young creature! She was a beautiful, but too frail a plant to resist the most pitiless storm to which she could be exposed.

On a certain Tuesday evening, whilst Violet was sitting at home, endeavouring to read, and secretly worried in a way she would not allow to herself, at not having seen D'Arcy the whole

day, the servant entered, to say that the box-keeper from Ebers' wanted to speak to her. Violet desired he might be shown up.

The ex-officio of Mr. Ebers came with a proposal to induce her to change her box for a smaller one on the other side of the house. "If you will give it up to us, Ma'am, for this night only, we will deduct it from your nights, and charge you nothing for the smaller box." Violet acquiesced, and added she would always be willing to give up that box for a smaller one, at a less price.

"It is larger than I want, and I am quite indifferent as to what side of the house my box is on; indeed, I always thought it larger and more expensive than I required."

"We made Mr. d'Arcy, Ma'am, the offer of the box you will have to-night, but he did not see it, and took the larger box, because it was the only one we had left on that side."

"I will speak to Mr. d'Arcy about it; and if you are willing to make the exchange, I think it would answer much better for me to do so."

Mr. —— said he had no objection; he could at any time let the box she was in possession

of with advantage. "A box like yours, Ma'am pays us well, and better, on the whole, in letting it by single nights, when we have already one subscriber for the alternate week."

Violet Woodville depended on seeing D'Arcy that day, before the time for going to the Opera; but eight o'clock came and he had not been home. She then remembered to have heard that a division in the House was expected. It was a new Opera, and Violet, who had not yet seen it, was anxious to be there at the commencement. She knew how useless it might be to wait for D'Arcy's return, and she departed, leaving with the servants the number of her box, in case he came in time to join her.

On this evening, Violet Woodville felt rather happier than usual; a sensation which we all experience at times without comprehending the means by which this variation of our spirits has been wrought; being unwilling to allow that the air we breathe, the very aspect of the street we inhabit, or, above all, our own health, may be the sole cause of the change. On such occasions, we much prefer indulging in the belief of presentiments of

good and evil, as if there was not enough mystery in our being, without extending its influence to things so trivial. But this is very natural, for it is flattering to the "pride that apes humility."

The house was nearly filled when Violet entered her box. She placed herself as usual, so as to be seen as little as possible, and her maid, Marietta, was obliged to follow the example of her mistress.

The house on that evening presented one of its most brilliant *coups-d'œil.*

Violet's box was on the tier above the dress-circle. There happened to be only one vacant box in the whole row, and that was exactly opposite. During the interval of the first and second act, a lady entered, and took possession of the seat nearest the stage.

She was young, strikingly handsome, and beautifully dressed. Violet recognised her as Mrs. Harcourt; but how different, how improved, since she last beheld her!

Violet Woodville contemplated her former friend, not with envy, but with a mixed sensation of surprise, curiosity, and undefinable melancholy. She had never before been struck

with the amazing chasm that fate, or conduct (as my readers will have it) had placed between them. There was such an air of satisfaction about the one,—there was such a distinction between the honoured wife of Hugh Harcourt, Esq., and the mistress of George D'Arcy, Esq. The one, courted, admired, and respected,—the other, conscious of disgrace, and only anxious to avoid notoriety!

Is it because she has been virtuous, and I have not? was the question that obtruded itself upon Violet Woodville; and then she thought of the past, and was lost in reflections, all tending to make her remember that time was, when their chances had been equal; and when, if either might have envied the other, she had been the person to be envied. On one side, every thing had been gained: worldly honours, and a good character withal. On the other, all had been wrecked! These thoughts, and such as these, occurred to the mind of poor Violet, as she sat mournfully contemplating the brilliant Mrs. Harcourt.

One dandy after another entered, and disappeared from her box; to all she appeared to give the same reception, but she would not

have looked so handsome, if the triumph of gratified vanity had not lighted up her countenance, as Violet had seen it do in days of yore. She could not abstract her observation from her old companion, and her attention was finally rivetted upon her, when she saw Mrs. Harcourt suddenly turn her head from the stage, for the purpose of saluting D'Arcy, as at that moment he entered her box. One or two other persons then left it, and D'Arcy, taking a vacant seat, appeared to have much to say to Mrs. Harcourt, and to be troubled with no desire of attending to the Opera.

In vain did Violet watch, hoping that D'Arcy, after a reasonable time, would withdraw, as the previous visitors had done; but no; *he* stayed.

She watched his countenance; it was gay and smiling. She observed Mrs. Harcourt; she was radiant. They talked earnestly; D'Arcy more particularly so; and he kept gazing at his companion in a way that was quite unnecessary. In short, the most unpractised eye would have suspected a flirtation.

For the first time in her life, Violet Woodville felt really jealous. How can I describe

the nature of the sick and sinking heart with which she adopted the conviction that D'Arcy loved another?

There are some moments so painful in their endurance, we would gladly forget that they belong to human existence—moments in which it would have been better to have been sleeping the sleep of death, than to have lived and suffered their anguish.

No tears rose to the eyes of Violet, for jealousy despises the relief of tears; but she turned faint—no incident, at that moment, could have affected her. The earth might have rolled beneath her feet, but, while life remained, she would have experienced but one sensation.

But I will not dwell on this theme: I will rather say, in the words of a beautiful writer—"Das Herz thut ihm allzu weh denn er hat ahnliches dinge erlebt, et scheut sich in der Erinnerung auch von ihrem Schotten. Du kennest warscheinlich ein ohnliche Gefuhl, liebe Leser, denn so ist nur einmal der sterblichen Geschick."

She who suffered remained for awhile like a person in a miserable dream. A sound of

mirth, a song, expressive of human joy when most triumphant, then burst upon her hearing, and awoke Violet from her trance of despair.

She listened to the music: it was so acutely in contrast with her feelings, that she exclaimed, almost aloud, "Could there be then so much happiness ever known upon earth!"

The duet was encored, and then the curtain fell; and, while the pit bestowed its deafening plaudits, Violet Woodville sank back in her chair, and all but fainted.

While Violet was hastening home, to indulge in her misery, D'Arcy remained at the Opera, unconscious of the anguish he had occasioned, occupying these idle moments in criticizing the ballet, and in admiring, with his eyes, the beautiful face and figure of Mrs. Harcourt.

"Where is Harcourt to night?" he inquired.

"At Crockford's, I suspect. I wish you would persuade him not to go there so much. I know he will be induced to play."

"I have put him on his guard once or twice, when he has been disposed to listen to me; but why not exert your influence?"

"Oh, Mr. Harcourt seldom allows me to advise him—and he is so easily irritated,"

Mrs. Harcourt exclaimed, and then stopped short in her sentence.

"Surely not with you? He must be as much your captive as ever."

"Mr. d'Arcy, you must know better than that," said Emily, in a half reproachful voice.

"I cannot understand any man not being at your feet—but then—he is——he is not worthy of you."

"He is a spoilt child, and every now and then regrets having married me. I should be wretched if I did not know that whoever had my place, Harcourt would not be in the least happier."

"No, indeed. Heavens, what man could complain if he possessed you!"

D'Arcy was enabled to hazard these *fadaises*, and made aware that they would be tolerated, by their forming the accompaniment to Mrs. Harcourt's abuse of her husband; and he put so much unction into his manner, that the matter was not ridiculed. However, Mrs. Harcourt thought it time to interpose with,—"What nonsense! I am not better than others; but I talk to you as I would to an intimate friend, who understands Harcourt as well as I

do myself; you must not make me speeches,—I don't like compliments."

"I don't wonder at that, you must be sick of them,—you, who have so many admirers."

"Well, if I have, you may suppose I know how much they are worth."

"True; but it may happen that you may be admired, and create a lasting impression where you don't intend it."

"No, no, men are so vain, it seldom happens that they bestow their serious attention upon a married woman, unless they think they shall be well received."

D'Arcy thought this was very true, but his acquiescence he forbore to pronounce,—he only went on enlarging upon the involuntary passion Mrs. Harcourt was capable of inspiring. She listened and smiled,—for she was vain, and she liked the language of admiration, especially from D'Arcy. She did not, however, listen at her ease, because she was afraid of being said to flirt with him. She did not quite know how far her position would exempt her from the remarks of those on whose fiat she placed her dependence. In

short, poorwoman! she could not consider herself to be sufficiently established to feel assured that she might flirt to any xteent, and still be deemed infallible. So she desired the world should see that she was courted by D'Arcy, but, at the same time, she thought it wiser, being only a *parvenue*, that she should not give rise to criticisms upon her conduct, which spiteful, but omnipotent, and, perhaps, jealous gods and goddesses, might render the instruments of her destruction. Mrs. Harcourt had already learnt, that the toleration of the world was not impartial; she remembered, therefore, that time was passing, and that D'Arcy had been seen during a considerable interval in her box. The ballet was all but over.

"Mr. d'Arcy," she said, therefore, half in joke and half in earnest, "people who have no discrimination will say that I am flirting, if you stay here any longer."

D'Arcy took the hint, and departed. He perfectly understood the policy on which she acted, and was quite willing to humour her.

"Violet," said D'Arcy, next day, "I was

very sorry not to get to you at the Opera last night, but the House sat so late I could not manage it."

"You went to the Opera?" said Violet, interrogatively, and trembling while she spoke.

"Yes; but I knew it was past your hour of staying, so I did not go to your box. How did you like the new opera?"

D'Arcy scarce heard the answer to his question, and he did not in the least observe the dejected air of Violet Woodville. He was just then thinking over the speech of a political adversary, against whom he meant that very evening to pit his own eloquence in the ensuing debate.

On her part, Violet ascertained that, not having previously returned home, D'Arcy had gone to the Opera without hearing of her having exchanged her box, and she learnt, besides, that when at the Opera, he had not taken the trouble of finding out whether she had attended it or not,—at least not until he quitted Mrs. Harcourt, and *then*, indeed, it was "past" Violet's usual hour for retiring.

Violet saw that at this present moment D'Arcy was pre-occupied by politics, and that

he was thinking more of public than of private affairs.

"He is caring more for his ambition than even for Mrs. Harcourt; and as for me——"

She left off thinking her sentence, but she garnered up her feelings, and gathered strength from his indifference to disguise them carefully. There is nothing which so effectually, or so disagreeably checks the exposure of our sentiments, as the finding another person as unmindful as he is unprepared to receive the communication.

While she felt so unhappy, perhaps D'Arcy had never, at any period, been more contented with his existence.

He was occupied in a way that suited his disposition, and, above all, the activity of his mind. In younger days he had been too dissipated, too roving, too independent, likewise, to bend his thoughts systematically to the course of ambition. When younger, he was too arrogant to reason wisely, and too keen-sighted to belong to any party. But D'Arcy was exactly the person to become, intensely, a man of the world, in conduct more than in feeling. Our feelings remain

as they were, much longer than we suppose; but the difference is, that our actions cease to be governed by them; we acquire, as D'Arcy did, "L'esprit du monde, et l'esprit du monde est un esprit de souplesse et de ménagement.*"

D'Arcy had no immediate desires to gratify, and no affections unfulfilled. The creature he had loved the most was Violet; but she was no longer a novelty, and now that she did not enter into his pursuits, he was willing to be absorbed by them, and, for the sake of diversion, to flirt with Mrs. Harcourt, to the prejudice of the unfortunate being whose happiness he had taken into his own hands; and he made but small allowances for the melancholy that was overcasting her existence. He could say to himself, "She should consider that this air of woe must be very disagreeable to me; it makes me prefer something else;—I must go where I shall escape this sort of ennui."

It was undoubtedly a want of calculation on the part of Violet, who should have reflected that D'Arcy would be displeased by her continual inclination to grieve. Nevertheless, she

* Massillon.

endeavoured, and imagined that she had succeeded in concealing her grief from him, on the subject of her parents,—in the same way as she strove to hide the pangs of jealousy which devoured her now. At all times, and at any cost to herself, she would have spared him pain, for there did not exist a more generous heart; but Violet did not herself know how easily her mind could be read. Besides, her health was failing, and she was losing her bodily strength.

While she remained abroad, the neglect of her parents did not so much surprise her. She thought it was merited, and she lived in hope. But when, on her arrival in England, she found that they had left it, and gone no one knew whither—when she could discover no means of ascertaining their fate, she was seized with the most vivid affliction. At first, D'Arcy had entered into her distress, till by degrees the subject tired him, and she was left undisturbed to commune with her grief.

That they might have suffered misfortunes, —that they might have died, believing her careless of their destiny; these, and all the imaginings that follow in the train of re-

grets, which we are led to fear are come too late, harassed her mind. Then it was that Violet Woodville recalled every act of kindness of her parents; above all, the thought of her father's goodness, and of her having been his greatest joy,—of the simplicity of his blunt affection,—of his honest pride in her beauty, and his spoiling love and tenderness in the days of her childhood!

She cherished such recollections as a feeling mind is wont to do—those that are the most painful. She would not spare herself a single agony, and she, who would fain have been so kind, so considerate, towards any thing that was human, became a prey to deep remorse! And, more than all, she had begun to doubt of D'Arcy's love; that love for which she had sacrificed every thing!—herself, and her parents!

CHAPTER IX.

"Oh! 'tis a fearful thing to feel,
In this cold world, alone."
CAPT. D. L. RICHARDSON.

"You will go to the Breakfast, of course?" said D'Arcy, one morning, in Mrs. Harcourt's drawing-room.

"Certainly, as I am invited. Shall you go?—but it is no use asking, as it is not to be for a week."

"I will go, at all events, if you will take me?"

"Very well—yes—only—no——I am to take some one else, I believe."

"But in your barouche there is room?"

"There is," said Mrs. Harcourt, with some embarrassment. "But the world is so ill-natured. I think I had better not take you."

"You are very much afraid of the world!"

"If I am, am I wrong?"

"No; it is wise to fear the world, even if it interfere with your friendships!" answered D'Arcy, drily.

"If you really required me to take you to the Breakfast, I would do it with pleasure; but I know, well enough, a hundred other people will be too glad to do so, and no remarks will be made about them; whereas I am not a privileged person."

"I see," said D'Arcy; "but whatever cavalier you take, will belong to you for the day. I shall, therefore, not go at all."

Mrs. Harcourt hesitated, blushed a little, and then said, "You can join me in the evening: after dinner, people disperse about the garden. I will take some one whom I can get rid of."

Upon hearing this, D'Arcy's eyes grew rather brighter, and his manner better humoured, as he graciously assented to a proposition which was assuredly very flattering.

"Will you go to the Horticultural Gardens to-morrow?" he presently demanded.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Harcourt.

"At what time?"

"Any time: I have not thought of the time."

"Say at four, then?"

"Very well—only——"

"What?"

"Why, if you are going—shall you go?"

D'Arcy laughed.

"What I was about to say is, that if many people are there, don't join me at once—I shall walk to the further end."

At this moment the door opened, and Lady M—— was announced—the last person Mrs. Harcourt wished should have seen D'Arcy at her house, cautious as she was of giving umbrage to the world, and having always in view the obtaining a steady footing in that society in which, at first, she was only suffered.

Lady M—— was a lady whose suffrage Mrs. Harcourt eagerly desired to obtain, and one whose verdict against her she would have greatly feared. Lady M—— had ceased to be young. Her manners were dignified, and she might still be called handsome and magnificent in her appearance; altogether, it must be said that she was imposing in person, both in character and in demeanour. She went with

the world; but she did not give her individual countenance to its vices. She blamed no one; but she had never been known to accord her protection where blame could be justly applied. Her understanding was too cultivated, her breeding too polished, to render her disagreeable; but still she was an alarming person to those who were not intimate with her.

In Lady M——'s collected manner of addressing Mrs. Harcourt it was impossible to discover whether D'Arcy's presence had made an impression upon her for good or evil. He soon rose to take his leave, and as he did so, Mrs. Harcourt carelessly addressed him, saying, "I will give your message. In general Mr. Harcourt is always in and out of my drawing-room during the morning,—where he is to-day I don't know."

This little speech might serve as a blind to Lady M——, but, otherwise, it was not politic in Mrs. Harcourt to allow D'Arcy to be in the secret of the ready meanness of invention it displayed on her part, and, accordingly, his mouth was still curling with a sneer as he rode down St. James's Street.

It may be fairly asked whether D'Arcy

seriously designed to seduce his friend Harcourt's wife. All that can be said is, that he despised Harcourt's character, and was more allied to him by intimacy than by friendship. Then, D'Arcy was habitually careless of others, and confident in himself. If his intentions were not really bad, he was still in a tortuous path, and no one ought to have known its dangers better than he did. There was safety in his not being in love with Mrs. Harcourt,—a fact he disguised from her, but not from himself; and, under false colours, he endeavoured to fathom her sentiments.

At first he had only been surprised by observing her transformation into a woman of fashion; but she had the art of rendering herself agreeable, and had spared no pains to make D'Arcy like her,—he was, of course, flattered. He liked her house, and gradually began to admire its mistress; he sought, perhaps, a compensation for the languor of his own home. By degrees D'Arcy was piqued into wishing to know more of Mrs. Harcourt. He began to think he was in duty bound to make love to her. The occupation pleased him, for he saw it pleased her, and she was

much too handsome for him not to feel obliged to her for this. D'Arcy was spoilt—he had never acquired self-correction,—and he had not the weakness or the tenderness of disposition which leads to forbearance, and sometimes supplies the want of it.

One day, about this time, Violet Woodville was astonished by receiving an anonymous letter, the contents of which smote her like a death-blow.

The letter informed her of D'Arcy's "devoted passion," for such were the words, for Mrs. Harcourt. She was warned to separate him from her, if possible, and to beware of Mrs. Harcourt, as her greatest enemy.

Some misfortunes become doubly certain when they are repeated by the world, which we had not taken into our confidence. So Violet Woodville felt it now, and she sat (like a person who has been stunned) for an hour with the letter in her hands.

No woman at such a moment is a competent judge of the best mode of acting; but, in some cases, impulse supplies the place of judgment, and a jealous woman always, I believe, acts upon impulse, if she can. Had

D'Arcy been in the house, Violet would have flown to him, shown him the letter, and have been contented when he had told her that all it said was false. Perhaps, too, moved by the sight of her grief, D'Arcy would have held himself bound to make his assurance true. But, alas! D'Arcy was not there, and long before he returned to his home, which was not till very late the next morning, from the House of Commons, Violet had settled her plan of conduct, and determined to communicate with him by writing.

If I speak to him (she argued), I shall only embarrass myself by the anguish I cannot disguise: neither will I inflict any scene of this sort upon him,—if D'Arcy has ceased to love me, perhaps it is my own fault. I know I am not what I used to be. I have become a clog to him. I will abstain from all upbraiding: whatever I suffer, have I not deserved it? So argued Violet Woodville. Her spirit was incapable of revenge, and she preferred blaming herself to blaming another: besides, she began to fear that all her misfortunes had been merited by her.

Violet could not guess from whence the

anonymous letter came, but concluded, at all events, that it was written by an enemy of D'Arcy's. I have neither friends nor enemies, she said to herself.

By the next day, Violet had written a letter to D'Arcy, which she intended should decide her fate. She would have given it on this morning, and was summoning resolution to do so, when D'Arcy addressed her, by saying he meant to go that afternoon to Putney.

The Harcourts had taken a villa there,—and in saying he was going thither, D'Arcy meant that he was going to their house. Violet did not know this, however, and timidly she asked whom he was going to stay with. Timidly she spoke, for she was broken by sorrow, and, now that she imagined D'Arcy could be inconstant, she felt an increased sense of humiliation.

The little pride that remained to one so lowly, and self-condemning, was that which she derived from the affection of the person to whom she had deferred every sentiment, and surrendered all but her conscience. His love proved vacillating,—so, therefore, must be her main stay in life.

D'Arcy's sense of right and wrong unavoid-

ably gave him a disagreeable sensation, at Violet's inquiry,—and he therefore chose to imagine it was made on purpose.

"I thought you knew. The Harcourts have taken a villa at Putney. What is the matter, Violet?" inquired D'Arcy, suddenly; for he beheld her turning very pale, and on his inquiry she hid her face in her hands.

D'Arcy felt shocked, and approached her, saying, "What is it, dearest?—tell me everything?"

"Oh, George! why do you ask me?" Violet Woodville exclaimed, bursting into long suppressed tears.

D'Arcy had not the dissimulation which would have induced him to feign total ignorance of the cause of her grief, and he said at once, "You surely are not so foolish as to be jealous of the Harcourts?"

"Indeed I am. D'Arcy, have I no reason to be so?"

"None, none, dearest!" D'Arcy replied, hastily; and, at that moment, he said to himself, "I will have done with that woman: what is she, compared to this one—who has loved me for myself alone, and who has none of the

worldly mindedness I have seen so much of, and which I despise so thoroughly?" So thought D'Arcy, but it did not enter into his mind to give up going to Putney that day; he had engaged himself, and he never dreamt of sacrificing twenty-four hours of amusement;—and to appear uncivil besides.

There was a point of difference mutually misunderstood. D'Arcy persevered in going to Putney, because he knew it was of no consequence to his new resolves, whether he spent a day more or less in the society of Mrs. Harcourt. Violet, who knew not how little he cared for her rival, deemed his going of serious importance.

D'Arcy thought it wise to treat her feelings lightly; contenting himself, therefore, with an assurance that she wronged him, and that his heart was hers alone.

"No, George," said Violet, "you do not love me now, as you loved me once. It is not your fault. I don't blame you, D'Arcy."

"My dear Violet, you shut yourself up, you grieve over past events, and then you get fanciful. You must trust more to me, and, above all, you must seek more amusement."

In saying this, D'Arcy was not unreasonable; for, as he was ignorant of the circumstances that rendered her jealous, he imagined her surmise to be wholly founded upon the knowledge of his frequent visits to Mrs. Harcourt, and that her low spirits had fostered the painful idea.

Violet hesitated, whether she should undeceive him, by explaining on what grounds her jealousy was founded; but while she was yet thinking whether she should tell him all, or leave it to her letter, D'Arcy had observed the clock. "I find," said he, "if I intend to go at all, there is no time for delay;" and he took her hand, evidently to bid her farewell. Violet no longer doubted about what she should do.

The very manner in which D'Arcy spoke, chased all explanation from her lips. She felt he had not then *time* to think of her. She composed herself, and asked how soon he would return.

"Probably, to-morrow."

"And you are not going to the Breakfast, to-morrow?"

"No, I think not,—at all events, instead of

going from Putney, I will come to town. It will be out of my way,—but what does that signify?—I shall see you."

"Oh! if you would come back!" exclaimed Violet, with sudden energy, "if but for a moment! You can still go to the Breakfast, so easily from town. I don't know why, but I am sure I shall be miserable, if I do not see you to-morrow. I shall fancy I know not what; and you must only pity me, and not be angry, for indeed there are moments when we cannot command ourselves." Violet pressed her hand to her aching brow, and she looked very ill.

"Take care of yourself, dearest,—go out and dissipate these ideas which have seized hold of you. As if I did not love you!—at present, I have no intention of going to the Breakfast; at all events, you will see me at four to-morrow.

"Good bye, my love, and don't be silly," D'Arcy added, in a tone of mingled carelessness and kindness.

Violet smiled through the tears which were still hovering on her eyelids, and tried to look as if she would obey.

She felt a little re-assured when D'Arcy seemed so certain of his return next day; but, as he was closing the door, she called to him, in a tremulous tone, "George, I hope you will not disappoint me. Pray come back to-morrow: I don't know why I desire it so, but I feel very unhappy."

"I shall certainly be here by four. Order the carriage. Try and amuse yourself. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Nothing—nothing."

"He is gone!" Violet involuntarily exclaimed, the next moment.

D'Arcy, before departing, would have endeavoured to soothe her more effectually, but he was afraid of encouraging her to give way to emotion, and he hardened his heart, by trying to think he was taking the best course in treating her grief lightly. Still, as he rode down the street, his mind misgave him, and he regretted that he had not attempted to penetrate more fully the motives of Violet's jealousy of Mrs. Harcourt. Certainly his leaving her, without a thorough explanation, was not the way to diminish her suspicions. Her looks of suffering, too, haunted him:

D'Arcy had not been so struck by it till now, when the vision of her sorrowful face remained in his mind's eye; and the impression became at length so strong, that he was turning his horse to gallop home. At that moment he was arrested by a servant of Mrs. Harcourt, who gave him a note, which, the man said, he was ordered to lose no time in taking to him.

The note contained a few lines from Mrs. Harcourt, begging D'Arcy, if he conveniently could, to be at Putney by six o'clock, as she wished to see him before her husband should come home.

D'Arcy knew that there could be no time to lose, if he meant to obey Mrs. Harcourt's wishes. He, therefore, rode quickly on, and Violet Woodville, if not forgotten, was at least neglected.

CHAPTER X.

"We know not the amount of misery
The heart can bear, when, one by one, the ills
Of life steal on us; but, alas! there are
Calamities which overwhelm at once,—
Crushing the spirit by a sudden blow,—
And leaving the poor victim powerless,
Without a chance of struggling with his fate."

ANON.

IN the meantime Violet sat at home, a prey to that gloomy depression, which is one of the most pitiable states of the mind.

She felt all the additional suffering arising from ill health; for, almost unremarked by herself, and quite uncared for, mental anxiety had long been preying upon her constitution, but, though delicate, being naturally healthy, the injury was slow in manifesting its symptoms. She grew weak, however, and became often restless with the fever of debility.

She felt ill, but not comprehending the cause, and not considering that health, or the want of it, could possibly add to, or diminish, her unhappiness, it is not wonderful that she took no care to check the growing evil.

Now, however, as Violet sat alone, she made an effort to dispel her low spirits, perhaps from feeling how overwhelming they were becoming. She tried her piano-forte, but the first notes she struck called forth painful recollections, and renewed her tears. She endeavoured to read, but at the end of half an hour she found she had only been studying the same page without comprehending a single line.

She flew to the open window. The sun was shining brightly over the green surface of the Regent's Park. It was a charming afternoon in the month of June. Violet heard the rattle of carriages, and watched the britschkas of the London ladies as they rolled on to the park. Their appearance, as they dashed along, in their brilliant attire and their open vehicles, conveyed an idea of gaiety, and of minds at ease, which the reality, if known, might have failed in proving.

Violet gave a sigh, and said, inwardly, "All those people cannot be happy,—but they are not as wretched as I am;" and she looked about for some object more in unison with herself.

A poor and ragged old woman was tottering along the pavement, and once or twice addressed the passengers for relief. Violet sent her some money. The mendicant looked up at the window, crying out, "Many thanks to you, lady; I am a happy woman to what I was, and my poor dear only son, who is dying of the fever, will want for nothing now, till it please God to take him. May God bless you, and pour the joy into your heart that you have given to mine, by your bounty;" and, with a countenance expressive of real content, the beggar departed.

"Her only son dying!—and that woman is rendered comparatively happy! She has no feeling, and I cannot pity her," exclaimed Violet; and she turned away, when an organ-boy struck up "Portrait Charmant," and Violet paused to give way to the associations the street-worn air conjured up in her mind.

An old romantic air like that of "Portrait

Charmant," has, sometimes, from its very commonness, a more powerful effect than the finest song out of the "Puritani."

With the former we are so familiar; in our happy hours we have so despised it, as that eternal thing; in our busy moments we have so contemned the tiresome organ-boy with his one tune; and, as we have driven along, and at the turn of a street have caught the weary notes of an organ, one has said, "How sick I am of that old French air!" and then we have pursued our way, and forgiven and forgotten the antiquated romance. But in the time of sorrow, of *inactive* sorrow,—then, if such an air as "Portrait Charmant" be heard mingling with the vulgar street sounds, it will strike you as it never did before, and in listening to the notes you find it is, somehow, taking a gentle revenge for all the contumely you have cast upon its hacknied sounds in days gone by.

So now was it the case with Violet; and when the music had died in the distance, her mournful feelings seemed unaccountably revived in strength by the passing notes of an old hand-organ.

Violet ordered her carriage. She was fearful of remaining longer in her present mood, and the idea occurred that if she did not exert herself, her reason would be impaired; her mind was growing morbid, even much more so than she suspected.

At the moment the carriage was ready, a servant brought up a card, the owner of which requested to see her if she should be at leisure.

"Monsieur Larray,

Professor of Music,"

was printed upon the card!

Violet rose from her sofa, and, in excessive agitation, was going to rush down the staircase. She recollected herself, and desired that the gentleman might be shown up stairs.

Henri Larray, for it was indeed he, had grown a more staid-looking man than at the period of his introduction to the reader at the commencement of this story. His vivacious countenance had acquired that subdued look which, somehow or other, the face of a married man always does acquire. Henri had not broken his heart entirely on Mrs. Harcourt's account, and he had married a pretty Eng-

lishwoman, with whom he enjoyed domestic happiness.

On finding himself in the presence of Violet Woodville, he testified embarrassment, and more gravity of demeanour than he might have done had he met her under different auspices. But he must have seen at once that she was the same in outward seeming. An erring course had not in her, as it does in so many others, led to corresponding manners.

Violet flushed on beholding her old acquaintance, and her heightened colour, which remained by her, prevented Larray from observing in her an appearance of illness, which, at another time, he would have easily discerned.

On his entrance, Violet Woodville held out her hand, without speaking, and it was some minutes before she could utter a word.

"You must be surprised," said Larray, "at my abrupt visit, but it is business that makes me have the honour of calling; should it be inconvenient to you now, pray allow me to come another day."

Violet assured him that she had no engage-

ment, and expected no interruption. This she said in a marked tone, glad to intimate that he needed not fear the arrival of D'Arcy.

Larray then repeated that he was come on business,—family affairs of her own, of importance to her to be acquainted with.

At this announcement, Violet trembled violently. She felt certain she was going to hear tidings of her parents, and inwardly she was almost overcome by a rush of feeling, strangely compounded of joy and terror. Visibly agitated, she attempted to essay an inquiry, if he had news of her nearest relations, but the words died away upon her lips; at length she articulated:—"My father! my mother?"

"I am come from France, from Tours," said Larray, "and an office has devolved upon me, which I am anxious to execute to the best of my abilities. M. Dupas has been living at Tours the last few years, and"——

"But my parents! my father?" interrupted Violet. Larray looked anxiously at her, at the same time with an air of curiosity, as if there was something he wished to learn. A sigh escaped him as he said evasively, "Yes,

part of the time your father was with M. Dupas at Tours."

"And my mother, how is she?"

"Mrs. Woodville is quite well," replied he, in a lighter tone.

So far, the conversation had indirectly tended to reassure Violet Woodville, and, to avoid immediate interruption, she allowed her companion to resume speaking, without further interrogations, trusting to hear all she desired from his lips.

Larray proceeded to state, that M. Dupas had been residing at Tours, but latterly had gone to Bagnières, on account of his declining health.

"Has he been ill, then?" exclaimed Violet, "the dear, good old man! Has he ever deigned to cast a thought upon me,—who have proved myself so unworthy? I was his favourite once, you know, M. Larray," she added, with a forced smile; and then she swallowed the tears that rose, and almost choked her.

"He never forgot you,—be assured of that, and he always retained his affection for you."

"Oh, then why have I been abandoned by

him, if indeed he did not think it best to forget me?" and Violet clasped her hands and wept.

Larray waited till her emotion had subsided, and then resumed the conversation by saying; "Do not think you were neglected. M. Dupas made inquiries about you, through various channels. All the time you were abroad, he knew where you were residing, and that you were well. He had wandered so much in his youth that he has acquaintance in many cities of Europe, and—and Mr. d'Arcy's official capacity rendered it easy to ascertain at all times where he resided, and"——

"Yes, yes, I see,—he could easily learn where I was, but why not write me one line of consolation? Did he think I had no desire to learn some intelligence regarding my family? He could not suppose that I had suddenly become dead to all human ties! Did it not occur to him that I had no means of obtaining any information concerning my father?—he must have known that my parents did not write to me. From him they concealed nothing. It would have been most charitable to have told me any thing concerning them:—

and M. Dupas, too, who was always so kind, and so considerate. My father!—Oh, Monsieur Larray, you cannot imagine what have been my feelings at times! To have had to bear, without any alleviation, the sense of continual remorse, till my heart has longed to burst!—to have thought of my poor father and mother as I have done,—to have inquired for them fruitlessly, and to have gone on without seeing a period to such misery! To have lived on, in uncertainty of their existence,—to desire only to die, even if I were unforgiven by them! If you could feel as I have felt, you would pity me! Yet do not think *he* has been unkind," added Violet, fearful lest D'Arcy should be censured; "far from it. It is only myself I have to blame, and for everything.

"And now, where are my parents; and are they both quite well?"

Henri Larray changed countenance; he appeared greatly embarrassed, and continued silent.

"Where are they?" demanded Violet again, while she fixed her eyes upon him.

"I have nothing to communicate that will

not be painful for you to hear," said Larray, nervously, and as if making an effort with himself.

"I was not aware how uninformed you have been of the events that have taken place—— Nay, listen to me—do not interrupt me, dear Miss Woodville, for your sake and for mine. First, let me say, banish from your mind all idea of neglect or unkindness; nothing of the sort was contemplated towards you. M. Dupas looked forward to seeing you himself some day, and communicating to you all his kind wishes and intentions on your behalf. I was residing a long time at Tours, and he trusted me with his confidence; and, at his death——"

"Is he, then, dead? My God!"

"He is dead; but he died happy, and at a good old age—he was seventy. Let us rejoice that his end was tranquil, and that, till within a week of his death, his health had been good: he thought he should be able to re-visit England at the period of your return, and to see you again—his dearest child, as he always called you."

"God's will be done!" said Violet, after a

pause, and in the resigned tone of one who is accustomed to suffering.

"And my father?"

"Ah! what shall I say!" exclaimed Larray. "Mine is a cruel task, and one I almost shrink from, now that I see its extent."

"Don't keep me in suspense—I can bear anything—I am prepared for anything. Do you not know we only come into the world to suffer?—and, therefore, it is all right, and as it should be."

"God grant you to be happy *some* time. You must not despair—you must hope always. You would have heard from our dear old friend concerning your father, but that it became unavailing, and then he thought it better not to write."

"Unavailing!" exclaimed Violet Woodville, with force. "Unavailing!—then now I understand you. What could make it unavailing, except that—*he* is dead?"

Larray bent an affirmative in silence.

"He is dead!" repeated Violet.

She changed colour alarmingly, but she did not faint. Her previous state of excitement subsided, and the effect rendered her appa-

rently resigned. Larray was exceedingly relieved by her unexpected composure. In a few minutes she requested to hear further.

"Mr. Woodville's health, when he came to Tours, was greatly impaired, and he was still under considerable excitement. He had a friend, however, who never lost sight of him; and when at last it became necessary to place him in confinement, M. Dupas engaged for him to live in the house of a physician whom he knew. The hearing of this is painful, but perhaps Mr. Woodville suffered less in consequence of this bereavement than he otherwise might have done; and his death-bed was undisturbed by anxiety. M. Dupas intended more than once to write to you, to tell you all this; but he was deterred, by fearing the impression that would be made upon you, by learning the state in which your father died: latterly, he fully intended seeing you again himself, and doing all he could to soften such cruel intelligence—his death prevented this: he has left you his heir, and I am his executor. I acknowledge I trusted not to find you so completely unprepared for all my fatal intelligence."

"No; no one would tell me that I drove my father mad!" ejaculated Violet; and she spoke in a tone that was harsh and unlike herself.

Larray endeavoured to speak words of comfort, but was met by no encouragement; he hardly knew if she heard him, and felt at a loss to comprehend the nature of her sensations. Violet appeared to be more absorbed in deep thought than in grief, and, when he spoke, his words seemed to be unnoticed by her. Larray was glad when he found an opportunity of saying, that he had a letter for her from her mother. This seemed to recall the unhappy girl to consciousness, and she said, inarticulately, "My mother, then,—my poor mother! Is not her heart broken?—I have done *that*, too!"

Larray actually coloured, as, in producing the letter of Violet's mother, he still withheld it, and, with great embarrassment, began to remind her that two years had elapsed since her father's death, and that Mrs. Woodville, in short, had, about six months since, married a rich manufacturer at Tours, and, consequently, it was to be presumed that she was

no longer inconsolable for her family misfortunes.

Violet's astonishment, and even indignation, were sufficiently visible, although she said nothing. She opened the letter of Madame Nicoise (her mother's present appellation) with a trembling hand, read it, and tossed it upon the table, muttering words which Larray could not catch,—but her gesture was expressive of contempt. Then, recollecting herself, she abruptly exclaimed, "But that is nothing, —and then my father does not know it, perhaps, for there is no saying,—none of us know that;" and Violet relapsed into abstraction.

Her mother had written to acquaint her with her marriage, to lament over "her dearest child's" unfortunate conduct, which had been the means of destroying her father; and concluded by saying that she (Madame Nicoise) not having informed the Sieur Nicoise of Violet's undutiful derelictions, she thought it would be most prudent for them not even to correspond: inasmuch as, on account of M. Nicoise's extreme respectability, he could not possibly acknowledge a con-

nexion with her "sweet Violet," the circumstances considered, &c. &c. But that the fortune of M. Dupas rendering her independent, if she chose to quit Mr. d'Arcy, many plans were open to her, and Madame Nicoise hoped that, if she had not lost her beauty, it would be very possible for her to meet with some one who would marry her, and then she would be quite restored to a position rendering her worthy of being acknowledged by Madame Nicoise, and which, she declared, she should then be most happy to do.

Larray now thought it time to take his leave. He wished he knew more of Violet's domestic life, that he might have ascertained how much the kindness of D'Arcy was likely to console her.

He asked permission to call again at three o'clock the following day.

At these words Violet appeared to recall some idea foreign to her grief, and she answered, hastily, "At three—no, not at three."

"I fear I shall be engaged before that hour," observed Larray; "will you permit me, then, to name the day after?"

"Be it so," was the reply; and Larray, after again endeavouring to say kind words, withdrew.

On leaving the house he bethought himself of inquiring if Mr. d'Arcy was staying in town, and living at that house. The answers were in the affirmative. Either D'Arcy's being gone to Putney was forgotten, or the circumstance did not interfere with the footman's notions of his master being resident in town, and thus Larray was not disturbed by fearing that Violet would be left too long to grieve in solitude.

When Violet Woodville was left alone, after the dreadful communications she had been receiving, a sense of misery stole over her, which was so stunning that for a long time she remained almost insensible; that is, insensible to the frightful turn her own thoughts were taking, as they brooded over past scenes, and her imagination revelled in recollections that were the most harrowing.

When the servant entered and announced dinner, Violet appeared to misunderstand him, and the man's astonishment was immeasurable when finally she exclaimed "Never!" Her

foreign maid came to her to make the same inquiry, and then Violet, with more composure, only said she wished the dinner to be removed, and that she was not well.

The evening drew on, and still Violet sat alone in her drawing-room, while one thought, more terrible than another, crowded on her brain.

She wished to die, and could have exclaimed, with melancholy earnestness, like Massinger's heroine in the play,

> "Why art thou slow, thou seat of trouble—Death,
> To stop a wretch's breath,
> That calls on thee, and offers her sad heart
> A prey unto thy dart?"

The twilight was drawing on; the distant hum of voices and of carriages was subsiding; the chirping of the birds, in the small surrounding gardens and the park trees, came more loudly on the ear, and the dying sounds and the comparative silence of an evening in that part of the town where Violet resided, succeeded to the noisy gaiety of a London summer's day in the season.

This additional external repose was not beneficial to Violet Woodville, and the stillness, as well as the growing obscurity, painfully

encouraged the ideas that were breaking her heart.

By degrees the room became peopled with phantoms, and the furniture and the shadows became images of her lost parent, till at last she fancied her father's form was distinctly visible at the end of the room, and she rose to approach it with staggering energy: the door opening, and the servant bringing in lights, occasioned a powerful and very necessary revulsion to these horrible conjurations of an excited imagination.

Restored to a better comprehension by seeing another person, and the bright light of the argand lamp, Violet was then in a condition to feel more reasonably, if not with an anguish less intense.

At length she threw herself upon her bed, and might have slept, perhaps, from exhaustion and fatigue; but she was also under the keenest nervous irritation, and, besides, sleep,

> "Like the world, his ready visit pays
> Where fortune smiles! The wretched he forsakes!
> Swift on his downy pinions flies from woe,
> And lights on lids unsullied with a tear."

The next morning Violet was ill enough for

her maid to urge her to send for medical assistance. This was positively refused, however. Marietta, nevertheless, was surprised and alarmed, and asked if Mr. d'Arcy would be home that day?

"At three o'clock," replied her mistress; and Marietta argued to herself, that if D'Arcy were to return so soon, Violet would not lose much time in being under his authority and care.

No wonder that Violet attracted the observation and the compassion of her maid: her manner was unusual, and her cheeks crimsoned with fever. She had eaten nothing for four-and-twenty hours, and she still continued without food, although she accepted some tea.

It was not easy to comprehend what was passing in her mind; but while she still could think that D'Arcy loved her, if but a little, one small white speck dwelt, no doubt, upon her dark horizon.

At three o'clock that afternoon she sent for Marietta, who, on entering her mistress's presence, was glad to see her smile; and, in a cheerful tone, she pointed to the clock on the mantel-piece, exclaiming,

"It is three o'clock! He will be home directly."

And then, waving her hand, Violet dismissed her maid.

In the midst of her misery, Violet Woodville clung to the recollection that, at three that day, D'Arcy had promised her he would be home. Sometimes, in great unhappiness, we attach an apparently unwarrantable anxiety to a slight circumstance, which, trifling as it may be, is yet agreeable to us. It can hardly be called hope that leads us to cherish this, but the inherent propensity born with us, of clinging, to the last, to the faintest shade of happiness that can yet possibly be ours.

D'Arcy was then indeed the sole remaining tie to Violet Woodville; and the desire she manifested for his return, and the confidence with which she expected it, showed the yearning of a human heart towards the only event that could occur which might confer upon it a consolation: that consolation, however, in this instance, was denied.

Three o'clock passed away, but D'Arcy returned not!

CHAPTER XI.

"That very day
A feast was held, when, full of mirth,
Came, crowding thick as flowers that play
In summer winds, the young and gay,
And beautiful of this bright earth."

"And I forgot my home; my birth
Profaned my spirit, sunk my brow,
And revelled in gross joys of earth,
Till I became—what I am now."

MOORE.

LET us revert to D'Arcy's proceedings on the previous day. As he rode along towards Putney he grew curious to learn why Mrs. Harcourt had ventured so particularly to request his presence before the arrival of her husband.

He found her beautifully and becomingly dressed, reclining upon a low Ottoman placed near the window of her pretty drawing-room opening upon the lawn; the room was scented with the perfume of large boxes of mignio-

nette, with heliotrope and verbina, and the blinds of the apartment more closed than usual, for the day had been uncommonly hot. The rays of the evening sun, as they fell through the chintz curtains, bestowed a softness and mellowness on each object that was shared by Emily herself; at least D'Arcy thought he had never seen her look so truly handsome. Her dark curls were drooping over a branch of red Camelia Japonica, which had been carelessly thrown on her little work-table of inlaid Sèvres, and the flowers tinted her cheek with their brilliancy, whilst, mingling with her hair, they contrasted with its shade of ebony.

"I am glad you are come," she exclaimed, with an appearance of anxiety, "for you can tell me perhaps if what I hear is true. Has Harcourt lost a large sum at Crockford's within the last three days?"

"I have not heard of it; who has said that he has?"

"Thank Heaven, then, it may not be true; for I think if my husband had been in difficulty, he would have gone to you for advice. Two or three persons have suspected it, how-

ever, and have told me of it, which has made me very uneasy."

"I am sorry for that, as it may be the case; but why not speak yourself to Harcourt about it?" asked D'Arcy.

"Oh," replied Mrs. Harcourt with a smile which was followed by a sigh, "I have never found my interference answer; I would fain play the part of the good wife, and do everything that reason could suggest to please or to be of use, but nothing of the sort is within my range: I have discovered this at last, and therefore, although I am anxious, I venture upon no inquiries, in order to avoid discomfort, and something more—a taunt perhaps—that *I* should have the right to offer advice. I am kept in due submission, I assure you," added Emily, in a tone between disgust and sadness, while she looked at D'Arcy with a look that seemed to say, "Have I not your compassion?"

The eyes that put this question were answered silently, but very eloquently, by other eyes, and eyes that sought to penetrate even more than to respond.

"As Harcourt's friend, why does she abuse him to me?" thought D'Arcy. "Does she de-

sire me to become *her* friend and not his?" D'Arcy was clearly arguing that to be the friend of both had become incompatible.

"I believe my husband to have lost a great deal of money lately," continued Mrs. Harcourt, "and I feared that this might be some new affair of the kind, which would be more ruinous than all the rest. He has been out of spirits, and I judged a little from that; from you I thought to learn the truth."

"Depend on doing so the moment I ascertain it. What lamentable folly in Harcourt to persevere as he does in all his caprices; and with you for his wife, to fancy he has a reason in the world to be discontented!"

"Is it Mr. d'Arcy who says that?" asked Emily, smiling and slightly colouring.

"It *is* I who say so. I am not blind to your beauty or your charming character."

"I am no better than others. If I care little for the world and less for admiration, it is because experience has taught me how to value both," was Mrs. Harcourt's modest response.

D'Arcy had an odd mixture of sincerity in his disposition; with him, in fact, it was rather

a kind of pride which made him refuse to allow his understanding to appear subservient to any of the subterfuges with which people sometimes venture to impose upon others; so as he had not yet arrived at believing in Mrs. Harcourt's despisal of the world, or the world's admiration, he could not help replying by saying, "You are mistaken, you are indifferent to neither; how I wish you were, and how I should like to make you feel far more than you do, the wide distinction that exists between one that would study your welfare with carefulness, and the admirers, the thousand and one would-be lovers that hover in your train, and whom I sometimes see you regard, when those who really care for you do not venture to interrupt them."

"Venture? and why should *you* not, if you wish it?"

"I often wish it."

"Since when?"

"Since I grew to like you very much, and since you must have seen that I have done so."

"I am not so vain as to have thought that I had attracted your regards; I have always

deemed myself the last person who could have done so."

"Be more honest with me, and acknowledge the truth: you must have seen how, each day, I have been growing more and more,—anything but indifferent to you."

"You are amusing yourself with me, Mr. D'Arcy."

"Then I have chosen very ill the time to do so," answered D'Arcy, in a winning voice, "when I find you worried by domestic annoyances which I cannot alleviate. Why do me the injustice to suppose this? You do not suppose it, I think," continued he: and he took the hand of Mrs. Harcourt, and retained it, long after she had made a feeble effort to withdraw it. "You *say* this only."

The conversation was interrupted, for the door opened, and Mr. Harcourt entered.

Harcourt expressed himself delighted to see D'Arcy, and begged he would always come and dine with them when he could get away from town.

"I almost wish I were you, D'Arcy," said Mr. Harcourt, when they sat alone after dinner, "you have a happier time of it than I

have. You have become a politician, and have a pursuit, whereas I have none."

"But you have a home, a wife and children, and a fine fortune, if managed well."

"I don't care about children, and I am always bored,—there is something d—d unsatisfactory in the existence I lead," continued Harcourt, with a sigh,—not from the depth of his heart, but the depth of his *ennui*. "I tire so of everything,—the House of Commons does not interest me, I am not sufficiently keen about politics; and, except when I am at Melton, I hate the country. I am not a county man; as long as my rents are paid, I cannot interest myself in farms and ditches, roads and haycocks, militia reviews, and those eternal quarter-sessions, and assizes—to me all these things are positive nuisances. Then I am sick of the continent,—of Paris especially; the French women are so affected,—the men are such coxcombs, they irritate my bile, as I cannot knock down nine out of every ten of them. I live, too, with people that do not suit me; I feel that I am losing my best years, without any satisfaction,—and I see no remedy, as I cannot live over again the greater part of my life, so

as to act differently in some matters that are now irremediable."

It was evident that Harcourt was alluding to his marriage,—an event which, in D'Arcy's opinion, had answered much better than he had prognosticated it possibly could. D'Arcy never felt less in a humour to bestow consolation on his friend, and much preferred that task when his wife was the object of it.

The following morning, Mr. Harcourt went to town early, having engagements, but he recommended D'Arcy to remain at Putney and to go from thence to the Breakfast; that Breakfast to which Mrs. Harcourt had so particularly inquired of D'Arcy, some ten days previously, if he should go,—to which inquiry, it may be remembered, he had replied in the affirmative.

D'Arcy spent the morning in loitering about the garden with Emily, and in endeavouring, more plainly than he had ever done before, to give her the impression that he was deeply in love with her. He was not repulsed by Mrs. Harcourt, as a better woman would have repulsed him; and D'Arcy might flatter himself that he had gained ground.

"It is two o'clock," said Emily, turning towards the house; "I must dress."

"Not yet, surely!" exclaimed D'Arcy.

"Indeed I must," said she, smiling. "You forget that a lady never dresses under an hour; as it is, I shall only get there by five o'clock." And so saying, Mrs. Harcourt stepped into the drawing-room.

"I really did not think it was so late," said D'Arcy; "I must bid you good bye, then, I find."

"How!—you are going?"

"I am afraid I——I think I cannot go to the Breakfast," replied D'Arcy; for he thought of Violet.

"Very well," said Mrs. Harcourt, with the coldest manner she could assume.

D'Arcy was standing so that he had a view of her features, reflected in the large glass before which Emily was then untying her bonnet; and he saw at once her angry countenance, flushed with sudden displeasure. He stepped towards her, and could not forbear saying,

"If there is one to be there to-day who will own that my presence is cared for, I will go."

"You are the best judge of that—no one does, that I am aware of," answered Mrs. Harcourt, with pride, and rather passionately; for she felt deeply offended.

D'Arcy possessed a bad heart, I fear: it was not love, nor even vanity, which prompted him instantly to determine on going to the Breakfast. If he liked Emily, he felt that he should like, better still, to crush the woman's pride which so naturally induced her to show some resentment at his apparently capricious disregard of her society. Nothing had subdued in D'Arcy that arrogant despisal of the feelings of all others, whenever he could extract something from them on which to feed the sneering disposition ever latent in his character; and Emily Norris, not Mrs. Harcourt, stood before him then, daring to show him that she could be cold and haughty.

He said nothing, but he went to the Breakfast; and I doubt if his promise to Violet, of returning to town at three, stood for five seconds as an obstacle to his going; for, by losing a little time, D'Arcy might have ridden home, and thence have gone late to —— Park from London.

This Breakfast was certainly one of the

prettiest fêtes of the season; and the spot in which it was given, in itself extremely beautiful. The day, soft and enjoyable, extended its influence to the minds of the guests—no crowd, no vulgar press or hurry annoyed them—nothing, in short, to destroy that illusion of luxury and refinement which is essential to please those whom satiety has rendered fastidious.

D'Arcy was becoming a rising star among the host of modern politicians, and was consequently courted and flattered by all the women. I own myself to have been unable to avoid feeling a little contempt for my fair friends, whom I have often seen lavish in their attentions to some politician of celebrity, but whose politics they perhaps hate—whose public conduct they abuse, and whose private character they will blacken with all the petty spite arising from idleness, prejudice, party-spirit, or total ignorance. Yet, in society, these very women will develope their frivolous vanity, by attempting to attract the notice of, and to have the air of flirting with, the great man of the day; and this how often, notwithstanding all the faults they charge him with,

and all the superabundant errors they can discourse upon with so much patriotic zeal, and of which he may or may not have been guilty! How often is not this very man the dupe of the seeming kindness and the winning smiles of fair ladies, in chip hats, looking very lovely with their fine skins, their *soupçon* of rouge, and their white teeth displayed in speaking the honied words of flattery, which so completely succeed in making the object of them suppose that he is appreciated, aye, worshipped by these artless Delilahs of fashion!

D'Arcy, to do him justice, was not easily flattered in this way; his nature rather prompted him to place too small a value upon the notice or the esteem of any one.

Mrs. Fitzmorris was one of the guests, and saw D'Arcy bestow on Mrs. Harcourt the attention which she had so perseveringly endeavoured to regain; and, beholding the admiration he displayed for another woman, she could not conceal from herself that she could no longer win one look of regard from him, or elicit any feeling beyond his merited contempt. This idea acted as a kind of vulture gnawing her heart, and there can be none

that gnaws so deeply as the knowledge that we are *deservedly* despised by a person whose favourable opinion we covet.

Mrs. Fitzmorris looked on at this breakfast, and flirted with other men. She talked prettily, too, to the women, but in her heart became a prey to envy and discontent. She had already done all she could to detach D'Arcy from Mrs. Harcourt; and more she would have done had she known how.

D'Arcy had certainly taken care to lose no time in restoring himself to the good graces of Emily, and he made a merit of having, for the sake of her society, renounced the most precious engagement, which required him to have been in town. Emily was flattered, and believed him. She more than liked D'Arcy, and the coquetry in which had originated her first advances towards him, had partly faded away, or been exchanged for another sentiment.

Still there was more vanity than love on her part. She was led on by finding that she had the power of making D'Arcy prefer her society,—he who had once comparatively despised it. She admired his talents, for Mrs. Har-

court was not deficient in quickness. She was rather what is termed a clever woman, and she turned with pleasure from the *ennuyé* and discontented language of her husband, to the brilliant and energetic conversation of D'Arcy. Then, when the world began to sound the theme of his praise, it was not lost upon her; and, like the multitude, she aimed still more at retaining D'Arcy, at least as a friend and an admirer.

Mrs. Harcourt was not bold and reckless, like Mrs. Fitzmorris,—such as she had shown herself to be, there are, indeed, but few. What Emily wanted in principle was partly supplied by the worldliness and the sense of outward decorum which her mother had so steadily inculcated, as the basis of all the good things of this world, and (as Mrs. Norris, I fancy, thought) of the next one too.

D'Arcy had penetrated Emily's vivid fear of losing the good opinion of society, and on this day he wished to give her no uneasiness by making his attentions too glaring. He, therefore, took care to disappear at those moments when the eyes of her most dreaded friends were upon her. Emily felt propor-

tionately grateful, and D'Arcy succeeded in inspiring her with that confidence which was likely to be so acceptable to her feelings, and which he justly deemed would be exceedingly useful to himself.

Late in the evening, when the trees were enveloped in shade, and the shrubberies were beginning to be smiled upon by the moon—a time when I have observed their umbrageousness to be more eagerly sought than when the rays of the meridian sun have rendered them, to my mind, so much more desirable and refreshing—at this twilight hour, Mrs. Fitzmorris had the discomfort of seeing D'Arcy offer his arm to Mrs. Harcourt, and induce her to walk with him.

Mrs. Fitzmorris was sitting on the lawn, listening with a smiling face to the compliments, timidly bestowed, of an unfledged Honourable lieutenant of the Guards, lisping with nervousness at his own temerity, and deeply smitten with the pretty features and the smooth and neatly-painted cheeks of Mrs. Fitzmorris, shaded as they were by the large *pleureuse* that hung over her hat. She let this boy talk to her, and, half appearing to listen

to him, or pretending to be attracted by an air of some German opera played by one of the bands of music on the lawn, the demi-obscurity aided her desire to notice unobserved every movement of D'Arcy and Mrs. Harcourt, who were now being watched by the lynx eyes of a dangerous and mean-hearted jealousy. Mrs. Fitzmorris thought that the objects on which her eyes were bent, and the angry sensations of resentful disappointment which devoured her heart, were known only to herself. A person, however, stood near, who saw the one and guessed at the other. She had attracted the attention of an old acquaintance, who could fathom the secrets of her bosom, and in whose mind she became the means of reviving scenes and impressions of days gone by.

It was Lord Stanmore, whose glance, while standing as an idle looker on, had fallen upon Mrs. Fitzmorris, sitting at some little distance, and quite unconscious that she was watched by any one. So, however, it happened; and when he observed the direction of her eyes, he perceived they were watching the movements of D'Arcy busily occupied with Mrs.

Harcourt. He remarked that she looked at these two till Emily had accepted the arm of D'Arcy, and disappeared with him by a distant angle of the garden.

"Does she still care for D'Arcy?" thought Lord Stanmore. "No, surely she is too heartless,—but yet she did once. He has long completely neglected her; but women are strange creatures, very strange." And Lord Stanmore pursued the opening train of thought till it led him to recal with sadness the time when he was the devoted admirer of the beautiful opera-dancer—*the* Violet Woodville—for whom he would have sacrificed so much, and who still retained possession, if not of his heart, of his memory, where she remained enshrined as *having* been the fairest and the most loveable of all her sex whom he had ever seen.

Lord Stanmore had never forgiven D'Arcy for his seduction of her, and though they had since met, nothing more than a mere recognition had passed between them. He retained no desire again to meet with Violet Woodville; in his eyes her charm had fled; and he pictured her to himself as grown bold and

depraved,—all, in short, that was disagreeable and most disenchanting. But suppositions like these bring no consolation with them; they tend, on the contrary, to create disgust, and to destroy the pleasantest of our illusions —the reliance we place on the faith of outward appearances.

Lord Stanmore had not married, yet he had often been sufficiently struck with the attractions of some beautiful girl in his own sphere, to have flirted with her, and to have felt very sorry that at the end of the season their intercourse should cease; or, if she married, he would feel an anomalous mixture of pity and envy towards her husband—envy, that he should have her for his wife, and pity for the poor man who ventured upon so irrevocable a step. He placed no faith in the education, the parentage, or on the behaviour of the girl he could not help admiring; he had been once cruelly deceived—Violet was living as D'Arcy's mistress! Whom could he trust?—was, not the question he put to himself, but the idea he had imbibed.

The course of Lord Stanmore's present meditations was interrupted. The garden was

being gradually illuminated by lamps placed amongst the shrubs. The distant crowd dispersed; the music was called to aid the scene of mirth within doors, and the gay measure of the favourite waltz of the season had given courage to Mrs. Fitzmorris's youthful admirer, to propose to that lady to enter the house.

He had been long thinking whether he might ask her to waltz, but his nerves were hitherto unequal to such a proposal; at length, stimulated by the music, and blushing ruby red, he attempted, by a few broken words, to express his wish,—nearly overcome, however, by tremendous apprehensions of waltzing ill—notwithstanding the chairs he had been whisking round his room for the three months previous.

Mrs. Fitzmorris accepted the offer of being conducted to the dancing-room, and, proud of his charge, this incipient coxcomb availed himself of her condescension, not quite foreseeing, then, the ineffable degree of puppyism at which he was some day to arrive, or imagining that the time would come when he should be looking another way, to avoid the bore of talking or even bowing, for old acquaintance

sake, to his present flame; and little dreaming of that future, when he should think her old, ugly, or gone-by, and might find it expedient to leave her to call her own servants, or to enlist other swains if she could.

I know of no existence like that passed in the world, for teaching us its general selfishness, or from which one may learn to moralize with such good foundation upon its paltry attributes.

Lord Stanmore, who was in a decidedly melancholy mood, preferred wandering in the garden, to the amusements going on in the house. It was a beautiful night; the moon was chased by dark clouds, not hidden by them, but they hung in sable drapery round the planet, and made her look more beautiful. As he pursued his way towards a grove, which towered at no small distance from him, the sounds of revelry grew fainter and fainter.

The gardens were on a splendid scale. At one side, a range of green and hot-houses stretched themselves, filled with every known exotic that skill had learned to rear. A wide expanse, in another direction, had been laid out as a Dutch garden; beyond, a feature occurred

which is only seen, in perfection, in England,—a green and level lawn. In another direction, a broad gravel walk terminated in an aviary.

Lord Stanmore bent his steps away from these attractions, and penetrated a grove of cypress on his right. He walked along the paths in almost complete darkness, but neither was the obscurity so great as to have deterred others from being in his neighbourhood, for he heard voices which he thought he knew, and was more than once tempted to laugh to himself at overhearing these innocent children of the wood.

It was foreign, however, to Lord Stanmore's nature to play the spy on any one, and he neither wished to interrupt flirtations, nor to be the occasion of sleepless nights to a soul. Finding, therefore, that the grove was not so unpeopled as he had expected, he thought of turning back.

The bent of his reflections had been changed, and something of the ridiculous had usurped the place of softer ideas.

He found he was approaching an angle, and, by turning up it, he fancied it would conduct him to the house by a shorter path.

At this moment he heard the sound of footsteps, evidently on the other side of the trees by which he was walking.

"But if the world should ever,"—were words distinctly whispered in a woman's voice, but, though whispered, they were spoken emphatically, and from the speaker's heart.

Lord Stanmore imagined he heard this appeal tenderly responded to, though somewhat inaudibly, and then the first speaker spoke again.

"Leave me now,—I am tortured with alarm. Hark!"

"I must get away," thought Lord Stanmore; "I cannot bear to be a means of terror to these people;" and he listened, in order to be certain of avoiding them if he walked onwards in the direction that he intended.

The footsteps ceased, and Lord Stanmore determined on proceeding, and on giving the unknown pair the opportunity of avoiding him, by waiting till he had passed, or of crossing through the bushes so as to be in his rear.

He reached the angle of the grove, turned it, and pursued his way.

At the very moment Lord Stanmore

emerged into the gardens, in sight of the house, two people appeared at the same moment crossing his path. It was evident that they could be no others than those he had overheard, and who had retraced their steps by a different direction, which terminated by an opening higher up.

The two persons were Mrs. Harcourt and D'Arcy.

Lord Stanmore appeared so unexpectedly close to them, at the mouth of the wood, that it was impossible to avoid recognition; and the moon shone right above them.

For an instant both parties looked, what both felt,—that their meeting was an unexpected annoyance.

D'Arcy and Stanmore bowed, but the lady hastily lowered her veil.

The two parties then passed on in opposite directions.

"D'Arcy," exclaimed Mrs. Harcourt, seizing the arm of her companion most forcibly, "I shall die of terror!"

"What folly! What can Stanmore—— besides, he does not write in the 'Age,' that I am aware of."

"But there is no saying what he may think, —and the world—the world!"

"Ah, the world!" repeated D'Arcy slowly, and the word jarred disagreeably on his ear. "I cannot bear a woman who cares for nothing but the world," he observed to himself; "and her remorse, her tears, for what were they?—the world! How the sight of Stanmore has reminded me of that poor girl! I will go home instantly."

"What are you thinking of? You seem to have no feeling for me!" exclaimed Mrs. Harcourt, in a tone of irritation.

"Really I am sorry you should think so; but would it not be best that you should enter the house by yourself, or at least not with me?—there are still some stragglers before the door."

"Well,—if I do not faint."

"Not here, for God's sake!" cried D'Arcy, quickly; "you had better let me conduct you to the house at once."

Mrs. Harcourt, however, adopted the plan

of quitting D'Arcy's arm, and, returning without him; she made the best of her way to the ball-room, trusting that her prolonged absence from it had passed unnoticed.

She remained near the door, watching for the moment when she supposed D'Arcy would venture again into her vicinity; for the time had come in which Mrs. Harcourt depended upon D'Arcy as much as upon the world. She had given herself another ruler, and, under his dominion, she was waiting for his presence,—and at this moment D'Arcy was on his road to London!

By degrees Mrs. Harcourt could not avoid perceiving that she attracted unusual attention from people in front of her, and that a row of young ladies and their partners in a quadrille facing her, said something to each other, and then, looking at her, laughed.

Although Mrs. Harcourt saw the direction in which this small fire was aimed, she trusted she was mistaken in fancying herself the individual object of it; and she looked to see if

she was in the neighbourhood of any oddly-dressed man or woman: but no; at her left were some exemplary-looking ladies of a certain age, and, on her right, two or three foreign ambassadors, the Prime Minister, and the Lord Chancellor, were solemnly engaged in conversation, discussing, probably, the relative beauty of their respective countrywomen.

Mrs. Harcourt waited with impatience till the dancing should be over, magnifying the misfortune of her evil star, which so unaccountably made her an object of observation on this particular evening.

She would have retreated altogether, but for the fear that this, too, might be construed into a sort of pleading guilty—of what?

Ah, the old saying (as it has now become) that "conscience doth make cowards of us all," is ever a true one. Mrs. Harcourt saw disgrace, perhaps divorce, and then annihilation, before her; and she stood in that room, while her hands grew cold and damp with nervousness and concealed agitation: for, in similar

situations, how often the effect anticipated is disproportioned to the cause, or our reason misleads us as to the cause, and only our excessive trepidation enables us to foresee a result without the pale of probability.

Aided by the music of Collinet, the dancing went on, neither quicker nor slower than usual, and the mirth of the happy reached its full tide; the conversation of the politicians was not suspended, and not one soul in that apartment of revelry and magnificence gave a thought to a being amongst them suffering one of the most irritating of mental punishments,—the fear of having suddenly become despicable—or ridiculous. There was no saying whither, in the space of twenty minutes, the imagination of Mrs. Harcourt had travelled.

At the end of that time, the quadrille had ceased, and, as the dancers dispersed, an opening was formed in the crowd, and at the end of the brilliantly illuminated room Mrs. Harcourt saw Mrs. Fitzmorris. That lady also instantly beheld the object of her hatred,

and at the same time began to stare, and to laugh, and to make remarks to her neighbours. Mrs. Harcourt would have died if she could, but felt fascinated, as if by the eyes of so many basilisks; and she could not move.

Within a second, Mrs. Fitzmorris was crossing the empty space of the apartment between them, and leaning on the arm of one of our most celebrated dandies, particularly famed for his biting sarcasms. What mercy was Mrs. Harcourt to expect from two such people?—and to her they advanced; Mrs. Fitzmorris attracting attention by herself alone, and now assuming her boldest manner, and talking loud enough to be heard by the whole room. "Nay, indeed I must, I really must tell her; poor Mrs. Harcourt—it is too absurd;" and so saying, this amiable couple approached their victim.

"Is it possible you don't know?" began Mrs. Fitzmorris, affecting to be so overcome with laughter as to be unable to finish her sentence.

"Know what?" asked Mrs. Harcourt, growing very pale.

"That we all know you must have been walking in the cypress grove this evening:" and again the laughter of the lady seemed to prevent her utterance.

A blush of crimson suffused the face of Emily. Had D'Arcy been there, she would have gone up to his side and said to him, "Protect me from these people;" but D'Arcy was not there.

"I do not understand you, Mrs. Fitzmorris."

"You have got a branch of cypress in your bonnet—it has got amongst the flowers in your hat, and it is standing up in the most ridiculous manner," answered Mrs. Fitzmorris, in a loud voice.

Mrs. Harcourt was overcome; and, at the moment when she only required presence of mind to make a careless reply, she fainted.

A combination of minute accidents of ill-luck had attended her. There was nothing more simple than that a twig of a tree should

have fastened itself in her bonnet; or that this should be first noticed by those opposite, or at a distance before her. In another moment, some one else would have taken upon herself the office of telling Mrs. Harcourt that her hat had been thus deranged; and, by doing it in a very different manner, all her nervousness would have been calmed, instead of being trebled in the way it was.

"Mrs. Harcourt is ill—has fainted!" uttered a hundred voices at once. The master of the feast had his attention called, and, with prompt kindness, he soon ordered every assistance should be rendered to Mrs. Harcourt, and she was conveyed to a private room immediately.

"How extraordinary! What is the matter? Where had she been?—In love with George D'Arcy!" were the questions and exclamations which circulated.

"Who is it, Hugo, that is in love with George D'Arcy?" asked an Oxonian, who happened to be a novice in London scandal.

"I will tell you," said Mrs. Fitzmorris's

partner, of whom I have before made such honourable mention. "I will tell you," said he, eagerly: "Mrs. Harcourt, that pretty woman, you know, with the black eyes."

"Take care," exclaimed a young man, passing, and giving a sharp stroke on the shoulder of the last speaker.

"What the d——l is that for, Toppington?" demanded the youth, turning round with surprise.

"Don't you see?"

"See what?"

"What I have not time to tell you;" and, without further explanation, Lord Toppington disappeared, leaving the young men in some alarm, as to what they had said amiss. They did not notice that their conversation had been overheard by an indolent and supercilious-looking man, with a countenance redolent of disgust and ennui—and who was no other than Harcourt himself. He had arrived at the commencement of the fête, and had gone away directly after the dinner, telling his wife,

whom he met by chance, that he felt bored, and was going home. He was by no means going home; he had an appointment, which was not fulfilled by the person who made it; and, in very bad humour, and suspecting that he had been played upon, Harcourt returned to C—— Park, as the only method that remained to him of passing the evening.

He re-appeared accordingly, and then heard of Emily's illness.

"Were not you here when Mrs. Harcourt fainted?" asked a variety of his intimate acquaintance, who had never discovered his absence. As a matter of form, Harcourt went to inquire after his wife; and only replied to those who inquired afterwards how she was, that she had quite recovered, and gone home.

It did truly happen that Harcourt overheard every word of the conversation between the two young men, whose town education had not been sufficiently completed to render them as circumspect as they ought to have been.

Harcourt was what is understood by the

term, 'cold-blooded.' At this moment he could have killed his wife; but, from temper, not from feeling, he swore an oath to himself, and turned away to drink champagne at the supper-table.

He did not in the least believe that D'Arcy assumed to be a lover of his wife—his own penetration, he imagined, taught him better. But in this excuse he would condescend to see none for her; and he laid it to her conduct alone, that she became the object of such remarks, while he determined to make her feel the full weight of his displeasure, without deeming it necessary that D'Arcy should come in for any share of it.

"I am certain," said Harcourt to himself, as he swallowed his last goblet of champagne; "I am certain D'Arcy does not care one d—— for her; but she shall pay for this."

CHAPTER XII.

"Pale, broken flower, what art can now recover thee?
Torn from the stem that fed thy rosy breath,—
In vain the sun-beams seek
To warm thy faded cheek!
The dews of heaven, that once like balm fell over thee,
Now are but tears, to weep thy early death!"

MOORE.

In the interim, D'Arcy had driven to town. He lost no time in doing so the moment he was free; for he remembered *then* that he had broken his promise, in not returning home at three that afternoon. More than one event, during the day, had called to his mind circumstances, which *then* he had no longer any incentive to forget; so now, as D'Arcy hastened back to Violet Woodville, returning love and good resolves were in his heart, and words of

comfort were hovering on his lips. For *then* D'Arcy was disenchanted,—his pursuit was ended,—and *then* he repeated to himself, "I hate a worldly-minded woman."

D'Arcy reached his own door; the servant who admitted him gave him a letter.

"When did this come?" demanded D'Arcy, who knew the seal and superscription.

"An hour ago," said the servant; "I was to give it you as soon as you got home, sir."

The letter came from a well-known political character, and one of those whose talents and influence constitute them leaders when the opportunity presents itself.

D'Arcy had heard rumours of a change of administration, but he disbelieved it. He at once knew, however, that this letter would communicate something eventful; and, seizing a light, he went to Violet's sitting-room.

It did not surprise D'Arcy to see her asleep upon the sofa, he knew her habit of sitting up for him; but the room was in confusion,—letters were on the ground; he observed that

the windows were open, and guessed that the night-air had blown in, and disarranged the papers.

D'Arcy first stooped to kiss the forehead of his mistress, but her features were buried in the cushion, and his lips but rested on the long curls that fell over them.

D'Arcy, anxious to read his letter, took no further pains to awaken Violet, and, arranging the lamp, for the sake of a better light, he hastily tore open the envelope.

It was indeed a communication informing D'Arcy of an immediate change of administration, and concluding by pressing him, in the most flattering manner, to form one of the few, whose advice would be attended to by his party on the present juncture.

It must be owned, at that moment, that D'Arcy dreamt a most pleasant dream of successful ambition; schemes of patriotism, and honours, that might follow; a theatre (and means, to boot), whereon to display his talents, —a field, at length, to build his fame upon,

and deeds! great deeds, that he should do!

"Violet, Violet, dear!" exclaimed he, at length, called from his reverie by the clock striking one!

"Wake, dearest! see, it is time, Violet! I am come home." And D'Arcy shook her gently by the arm which lay uppermost.

Finding he did not rouse her, and growing impatient, D'Arcy raised her, intending to make her sit upright.

The burthen felt heavy, when by his efforts Violet was lifted from her recumbent position:—her head hung on one side, whilst her eyes were half open!

For a full moment D'Arcy gazed upon the form he held!—for a full moment he continued to support the body as he had raised it. Then D'Arcy let it fall, and staggered backwards!

The next instant the servants were aroused by a scream,—not a woman's, but a man's!—the shriek of a man horror-stricken!

The domestics rushed into the apartment. D'Arcy was kneeling with one knee on the ground,—his face hidden in his hands, but those hands shook convulsively.

Before him lay the body of Violet Woodville, and the eyes were gradually relaxing in their tension, and imperceptibly opening wider and wider. Her face was very pale, save two small red spots on either cheek, where fever had been burning.

"Oh, Mr. d'Arcy! Sir!—what is to be done?" exclaimed Howell, the first, in some degree, to recover presence of mind.

D'Arcy rose, and, before another word could be said, he was traversing the streets in search of medical aid.

But D'Arcy had lost all mental power, and he became sensible of a confusion of thoughts which rendered him unable to guide himself rightly, and, though he knew full well the residence of such men as Halford or Brodie, he could direct his steps to neither.

Luckily Howell had followed his master,

and he begged him to return home. "Sir," said he, "I have sent three servants for physicians, and I will go for one myself; but do consider, Sir, if she should recover, your being with her at the time may make all the difference."

D'Arcy suffered himself to be advised, and he returned home.

What "a change had come o'er the spirit of his dream!" Where now were D'Arcy's visions of ambition?

What then to him was his name, though it were to live a thousand years? What then cared he for England's might, or the proud panoply of renown, that hangs, from beyond the gloom of future ages, o'er him whose wisdom shall have been a means unto England's matchless glory?

What were then to D'Arcy the witchery of expected power, the applauses of a people, and a universal fame?

All had vanished beneath the mantle that

Death had spread before his eyes,—shadowing forth the nothingness of man, and the power of God,—recalling, indiscriminately youth, and beauty, and all we love, to those unknown realms which all the talent of man has never yet explored!

Marietta, the Italian maid, weeping, and in semi-hysterics, was, at the same time, employed in endeavouring to restore animation to her mistress.

On the sofa she had found a bottle of laudanum, and, clasping her hands, and screaming, she showed it to D'Arcy. It belonged to a medicine chest, and was labelled *poison!*

D'Arcy well remembered presenting that medicine chest to Violet when they went abroad. It was a small and beautifully-ornamented box, and the bottles were handsomely mounted.

They had been filled at the chemist's with the ordinary routine of medicines, and lauda-

num, of course, included amongst them. The bottle that contained it was empty. It had been drained to the dregs!

D'Arcy could no longer doubt that a heavy sleep had fallen upon Violet,—the immediate effect of the laudanum, and the way in which it becomes fatal, if its action be allowed to remain undisturbed.

D'Arcy knew this, and dared not hope. From time to time Marietta wrung her hands, and exclaimed, in Italian,—

"Se vostra Signoria fosse tornato a casa alle tre ore, questa sventura non sarebbe mai accaduta!"

The arrival of a surgeon sooner than D'Arcy had dared to expect, afforded some relief.

"How long since do you suppose the poison to have been taken?" was the question first demanded by Mr. ——.

Marietta, the only person who could give information, said it must have been since three o'clock. She stated that her mistress had appeared ill, and very much agitated in her

manner since the time D'Arcy had been absent, and that she fancied she must have heard a great deal of bad news, and was evidently labouring under distress; but that she considered her better when she was sent for in the afternoon by her mistress, who, pointing to the clock, told her at that hour she expected Mr. d'Arcy to return.

Since then, Marietta declared, she had been twice into the sitting-room, at seven and at eleven o'clock; and, seeing Violet lying on the sofa, on both occasions, she concluded she had fallen asleep; and her only anxiety was to avoid disturbing her.

While he listened to these details, the surgeon made use of all the remedies he thought available. D'Arcy attempted to examine some letters which were scattered about; and, among them, he discovered that of Violet's mother, and one also, which lay open and unsealed, but which he noticed, because it was in Violet's hand-writing: he was, however, too agitated to read it, even though he attempted

to do so; but he determined not to lose sight of a paper so precious, and he carefully charged himself with it.

"Is there hope?" he asked, at length.

The surgeon turned his eyes upon the speaker, ere he replied, and riveted them for a moment upon the man who stood beside him —upon D'Arcy.

No one could have exhibited a stronger instance of the power of the mind upon the countenance. Not a feature could have been altered; yet such a change had gone forth upon his face, that I doubt if D'Arcy, as he now stood, would have been recognisable by any of his friends.

"There is no hope!" was the slow reply of the surgeon, while he mentally said to himself, with the intuitive knowledge of a man versed in humanity, "I do but tell him that of which he is already certain. This man must have deeply loved! How much more deeply has he sinned!"

What a scene that room presented! On

the one hand, the well-furnished apartment, cheerful in itself, and possessed of so many articles of luxury and comfort—the very chintz covering of the sofas, such objects as even these, stood out in horrible disunion with the tragedy of that hour!

On the couch lay all that remained of Violet Woodville. The traces of beauty were there still, but the hectic spots of fever were dying fast away. Her hair was partly in disorder, and partly retaining, still, some of the arrangement it had received that very day from the hands of Marietta. The hair, however, seemed chiefly to be grouped around the throat and shoulders, as if it had bestowed itself with care, to shade the chiselled features of the dead. The surgeon had closed the eyes; and the long lashes fell in beautiful lines over the marble skin—only the mouth bore the semblance of sorrow in its expression.

On the ground, at Violet's feet, sat her Neapolitan maid, weeping heavily; at a little distance stood D'Arcy and the surgeon.

"Sir," said the latter, after a short pause, "you had better retire;" and he endeavoured gently to lead D'Arcy from the room.

* * * * *

The next day formed a feast for the lovers of news and scandal.

"I suppose," said one, "you have heard what has happened to poor D'Arcy? That girl, who was his mistress, has poisoned him, and then stabbed herself."

"Good heavens! but I understand he will recover, and that it was not certain that she stabbed herself, but only took prussic acid in his presence!"

"It is a horrid affair," said a third. "I hear the girl killed herself in a fit of passion because D'Arcy was jealous of her and threatened to leave her. There will be an inquest, of course. You have heard, I suppose, that Lord —— is to be the new Premier?"

"Pray who is to have the War-Office?" demanded a worthy House-of-Commons bore of an acidulated ex-officio.

"That madman George d'Arcy; they can find no one else, and they mean to wait till they can take off his strait waistcoat!"

"Bless me, what times we live in! All I can say is, that if they venture upon such a thing, I shall think it my duty to get up in the House and to say that they must be aware," &c. &c. &c.

"Harcourt has had a blow-up with his wife —I am in hopes there will be a divorce!" exclaimed a lounger at Crockford's.

"I doubt that; she would have the best of it, and could get the divorce first, if she tried for it."

"Oh, I know for a fact," rejoined another, "that there has been a violent quarrel, and that Harcourt threw a brush or a pomatum-pot at her, but that they can't separate, because he is so "hard up"—he finds he cannot make her an allowance: and I hear also that Mrs. Fitzmorris has been in hysterics all day, and has sent for everybody to tell them she shall always have to reproach herself with the

death of D'Arcy's mistress, who took poison out of jealousy because D'Arcy made love to her!"

An inquest was held upon the body of Violet Woodville. Several of D'Arcy's friends, when once informed of what had occurred, interested themselves to render it as private as possible.

D'Arcy's attendance was dispensed with. Marietta testified to his uniform kindness to the deceased. She also spoke to the alteration which had appeared in the bearing of her mistress previously to her death.

The next principal witness was Larray, who stated the painful information he was the means of conveying to the deceased. A few more circumstances were detailed, tending to show that her mind was not in its usual state on the day that she swallowed the poison A verdict of temporary insanity was returned which was considered perfectly satisfactory.

The letter without an address and in Violet's handwriting, which D'Arcy had found on the

night of her death, was not produced. He spoke of it to no one, but, as it was seen afterwards, it may be as well to say here that the very incoherent style of that letter tended to prove more particularly that hallucination of intellect was approaching at the time when Violet Woodville wrote it,—probably a few hours before her death.

D'Arcy's friends were now at the helm; and before the town had quite ceased talking and wondering over late events, it was understood that he had requested to be sent upon a distant mission to North America, and that his desire had been at once complied with.

Two years elapsed and Lord Glendore died, bequeathing his whole property (to the surprise of some people) to his distant relation, George d'Arcy.

Business connected with his new fortune obliged D'Arcy to return to England, and there he remained. A path was open to him in which he must have found excitement if not enjoyment, and D'Arcy rose to be what is

termed a great man, in an incredibly short period of time.

As years passed, his manners grew colder. He was on terms of private friendship with no one, while at balls and parties he was seldom seen.

Mrs. Fitzmorris found that he had forgotten either her existence, or that he had ever been acquainted with her. In consequence of this total disregard, she wrote to him requesting an explanation. She received no other answer than an inclosure containing a certain anonymous letter found amongst the papers of Violet Woodville. D'Arcy had detected this composition to be the performance of Mrs. Fitzmorris.

With the Harcourts D'Arcy, on his return to England, appeared to have lost much of his intimacy.

Harcourt devoted himself to the turf, and, notwithstanding a separation had been reported, he appeared to get on much better with his wife than formerly. He lived but

little at home, however, and was continually falling into pecuniary embarrassments.

Mrs. Harcourt, if that could be possible, became every season more and more guarded in her conduct; and she had the satisfaction of establishing a reputation for most notoriously unblemished virtue.

The women grew rather afraid of her, and the young men treated her with immense respect. She had not the same popularity, because some people declared she was inclined to be uncharitable towards her neighbours, and others that she was a disagreeable prude; her beauty also was greatly diminished by a general air of formality and discontent, which pervaded every feature.

D'Arcy never renewed his *friendship* with her; and upon the whole, when people gave themselves the trouble to think about it, they settled that she and D'Arcy entertained a mutual dislike to each other.

A particular acquaintance once remarked this to her.

"It is true," replied Mrs. Harcourt, "I do not like Mr. d'Arcy. I have known him well, and I acknowledge his great talents; but he is only one of many proofs, that a dissipated man is always unworthy of being the friend of a truly estimable woman."

Circumstances are not well remembered in great towns like London, and time is our most amiable auxiliary whenever there is something we desire that the world should forget.

Ten years rolled away.

D'Arcy was never supposed to be near matrimony, nor did he ever occasion a sigh of disappointment in the breast of the most marrying mamma existing. Not one of them entertained a hope that D'Arcy would live to surrender.

D'Arcy had employed some of his leisure hours in collecting books, which formed a valuable addition to the library at M——— park, bequeathed to him by Lord Glendore.

One day during an autumn recess, and when D'Arcy was at M——, he employed him-

self in arranging his library; and his cousin Lord Toppington, who was with him on a visit, gave him his assistance.

"What is this?" exclaimed the latter, while engaged in turning over the leaves of an ancient-looking book.

"What?" repeated D'Arcy, looking over his cousin's shoulder.

He saw nothing but some withered flowers, between the leaves of the volume. Withered as they were, there was no mistaking them.

They were the flowers of the geranium. Years had passed away, since D'Arcy had gathered up those flowers from the ground where the hand of Violet Woodville had scattered them.

It was on the day of Harcourt's marriage. D'Arcy, on that occasion, had put them carefully away in this very book.

"Elle étoit de ce monde où les plus belles choses
Ont le pire destin;
Et Rose elle à vécu, ce que vivent les roses,
L'espace d'un matin,"

said Lord Toppington, reading out some lines

that caught his eye; and he carelessly rejoined, "That is a quotation I have often seen. This is an old French book, 'Poësies de Malesherbes.'"

"Yes," answered D'Arcy: "it is a rare edition: give it me."

One day, when D'Arcy was left without anything to wish for, enjoying a career of success such as fell to the lot of few—one day, when his name had acquired a European fame, and when the sun of prosperity was at its zenith—when nothing seemed wanting to his private happiness, or his public glory,—D'Arcy shot himself!

It was impossible to account for his committing suicide; and, after a most minute investigation of witnesses, the jury were forced to return a verdict of *felo de se!*

A will was found, by which D'Arcy expressed a wish that his property should be entailed on Lord Toppington, his nearest relation. "But this I leave to the mercy of the Crown," was the concluding observation of the

will; showing that, at the time of making it, D'Arcy must have contemplated the act by which his property became forfeited.

In the escritoire, which D'Arcy was in the daily habit of using, a letter was found, remarkable for its contents, and which, from its incoherency, left no doubt by whom it had been written, on the minds of those at all acquainted with the story I have undertaken to narrate.

Neither date, signature, nor address appeared to this paper, which was worn, as if it had been often read, and ran as follows:—

"Dearest George,—I have torn up a letter I wrote, intending to give it you; but I have done right,—it was to tell you, you have ceased to love me. If it is so, it is my own fault. Never blame yourself about me,—for you have been all goodness. I am not clear, and I do not feel well. But *he* is dead, D'Arcy, and I have killed him. When I see you to-morrow I will tell you all about it. I

am not certain why I am writing this, but if my father sends for me, I shall go to him,—I cannot wait even to see you.

"Dearest, you have been very kind to me.—I have never ceased to love you. Away from you, I should not have wished to live. So, dear George, you could not help yourself, and I would be with you, and you have always been good to me. If either of us have been to blame, it is I,—never believe otherwise than that.

"Oh! my head aches. It seems strange, but I cannot read what I am writing: but I mean to say all that is kindest to you, and that you are to be happy, D'Arcy,—always happy,—dearest, happy,—you will be happy,—hap—"

THE END.

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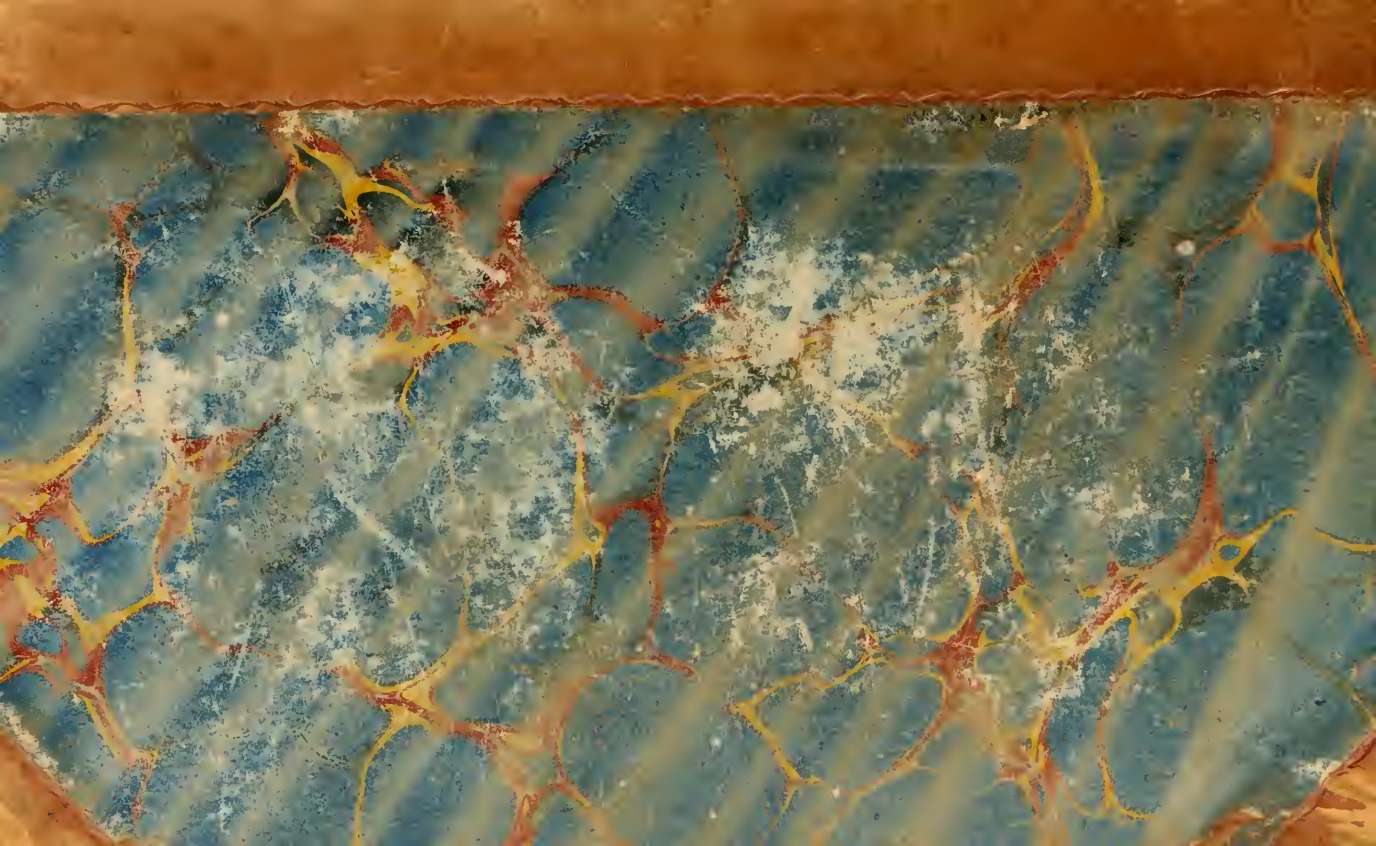
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